LETTERS

FROM

AN ENGLISH TRAVELLER

[MARTIN SHERLOCK, Esq.]

[PRICE THREE SHILLINGS.]

215 a 12

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AN ENGLISH TRAVELLER.

[MARTIN SHERLOCK, Esq.]

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH ORIGINAL PRINTED AT GENEVA.

WITH NOTES.

Rien n'eſt beau que le vrai, le vrai ſeul eſt aimable. BOILEAU.

Nothing is beautiful but Truth,
And Truth alone is lovely.

LONDON,

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AND N. CONANT, FLEET-STREET.

MDCCLXXX.

TO THE HONOURABLE AND RIGHT REVEREND

F R E D E R I C K,

LORD BISHOP OF DERRY.

MY LORD,

DEDICATIONS, in general, are ſuch heaps of trifling dullneſs, that they diſguſt even the perſons to whom they are addreſſed: As for me, I will not praiſe your Lordſhip, becauſe every one praiſes you. I have ſeen many countries; and in every town where you have reſided, I have heard a repetition of the ſame elogiums on the goodneſs of your heart, the ſweetneſs of your manners, and the charms of your wit. The moſt reſpectable perſons, and thoſe who had moſt accompliſhments, were thoſe who praiſed you moſt. I beg your Lordſhip to accept this tribute as a proof of my heart-felt eſteem, and to believe that I am, with the moſt ſincere attachment, and the moſt profound reſpect,

MY LORD,

Your Lordſhip's moſt humble

And moſt obedient ſervant,

MARTIN SHERLOCK.

P R E A M B L E.

I could preſent to the publick two hundred letters; I offer them twenty, becauſe I thought I ſhould ſhew them more reſpect by publiſhing a hundred pages, which they might read twice, than by printing a thouſand, of which they would never read half. As to elegance of ſtyle, none will be found, for it is an Engliſhman who writes: In a plain ſtyle will be found ſome ideas and truth.

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* Miſprinted 'Roſs.'

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LET-

LETTERS

FROM

AN ENGLISH TRAVELLER.

LETTER I.

BERLIN, *Oct.* 10, 1777.

THE King of Pruſſia is every where known as a great king, a great warrior, and a great politician; but he is not every where known as a great poet and a *good man*. Marcus Aurelius, Horace, Machiavel, and Cæſar have been his models, and he has almoſt ſurpaſſed them all. I have never heard of a human being that was perfect: this monarch alſo has his faults; but, *take him for all in all*, he is the greateſt man that ever exiſted.

At the beginning of his life he publiſhed his Anti-Machiavel, and this was one of the completeſt ſtrokes of Machiaveliſm that ever was made. It was a letter of recommendation of himſelf that he wrote to Europe at the inſtant when he formed the plan of ſeizing Sileſia.

To his ſubjects he is the juſteſt of ſovereigns; to his neighbours he is the moſt dangerous of heroes; by the former he is adored, by the latter he is dreaded. The Pruſſians are proud of their Great Frederick, as they always ſtyle him. They ſpeak of him with the utmoſt freedom, and at the ſame time that they criticiſe ſeverely ſome of his taſtes, they give him the higheſt elogiums. He was told that ſome one had ſpoken ill of him. He aſked if that perſon had 100,000 men? He was anſwered, No. 'Very well,' ſaid the king, 'I can do nothing; if he had '100,000 men, I would declare war againſt him.'

The character of this age, in which men are the moſt miſtaken, is this prince; and the reaſon is, that they confound two parts of his character, and form only one opinion on two points, each of which requires a ſeparate opinion. The King of Pruſſia has occaſioned the death of ſome thouſands of men; and yet the King of Pruſſia is a merciful, tender, and compaſſionate prince. This ſeems a contradiction, but it is a certain truth. He muſt firſt be conſidered as a conqueror, where he is not ſuffered to liſten to the voice of humanity. When heroiſm is out of the queſtion, we muſt examine the man. It will be ſaid that this is a ſubtlety. I deny it, and appeal to hiſtory: what clemency is more generally acknowledged than that of Julius Cæſar? What conqueror has ſhed more blood?

I own to you, that, when I entered Pruſſia, I had ſome prejudices againſt the king: theſe are the reaſons that made me change my opinion.

He was forced to marry the queen, and though he has never lived with her, ſhe loves him, becauſe he has always treated her with reſpect, and has always had a regard for her. She has a palace at Berlin, and another at Schenhauſen, where ſhe paſſes the ſummer. Her court, which ſhe holds twice a week, is brilliant and numerous, becauſe it is known that the king is ſenſible

of

of the attention that is ſhewn her. She has ſome heſitation in her ſpeech; but ſhe is the beſt princeſs in the world, and the king eſteems her highly.

The princeſs Amelia is oppreſſed with infirmities and years. She has loſt the uſe of one arm and the ſight of one eye. She has wit and an improved underſtanding; and the king never goes to Berlin for five hours but he paſſes three with this ſiſter.

The following incident was related to me by her Royal Highneſs the reigning Dutcheſs of Brunſwick *: While ſhe had the ſmall-pox, the king went to ſee her; ſhe was thought to be in great danger; he threw himſelf on his knees by her bed-ſide, kiſſed her hand, and bathed it with his tears. What a moment for a Rubens to paint the moſt formidable monarch in Europe paying this tribute of ſenſibility to a ſiſter whom he loved! And what a fine companion for the picture of Coriolanus †, at the inſtant when that haughty Roman was ſacrificing to an emotion of tenderneſs his glory, his revenge, and his life!

Man is a diſcontented animal; he loves to complain: the king's ſubjects complain of taxes, and I have never ſeen any ſubjects who do not complain of theirs. The Pruſſians complain leſs than any others, and the reaſon is evident: the government is ſteady, impartial, and the weight of the taxes does not alter, as in other countries, but is always the ſame. Men every where take pleaſure in ſpeaking ill of their ſovereign: God knows there never was a better king than ours, yet his ſubjects ſpeak ill of him every day. To me therefore a very ſtrong proof that the Great Frederick is good, ariſes from his ſubjects ſaying a little ill of him and much good. But here is another proof much ſtronger: he

[* Styled by Dr. Moore, in his late 'View of Society and Manners in France,' &c. the king's favourite ſiſter.]

† The king has beſpoke this picture; and it is now almoſt finiſhed by the celebrated Battoni at Rome.

has never put a man to death*; and when I tell you that he lives without guards, I fancy you will allow that to be a proof of his having an inward ſenſe that he has never done an unjuſt action.

LETTER II.

BERLIN.

PLUTARCH and Shakſpeare have drawn great men in their ſlippers and night-caps. I cannot ſhew you his Pruſſian Majeſty in his night-cap, for he never wears one; he acquired a habit in his youth of ſleeping bare-headed in order to harden himſelf. Nor has he any ſlippers, for as ſoon as he leaves his bed he puts on his boots. It is known that he riſes at four, that he goes to bed at nine, that he defers nothing, that he loves a joke, that he eats a great deal of fruit, that he plays on the flute every evening, that he paſſes moſt of his time at Sans-ſouci in his old boots, and that he governs Europe.

I have ſeen him three times; the two firſt were at the review at Potſdam; it was a fine ſun-ſhiny day, and 40,000 men were divided into two bodies to make a battle. An old general told me in the evening at ſupper at the Prince Royal's, that, if I had been in an engagement, I ſhould not have had ſo perfect an idea of a battle as that which I had received. To pretend to give you a deſcription of it would be equally abſurd and impoſſible: read thoſe of Homer and Taſſo; all that they ſay is true, eſpecially this ſtanza:

[* The author muſt doubtleſs mean in time of peace, by the civil ſword. In war, in battle, how many thouſands have been put to death by him and his military executioners!]

In

In tanto il ſol, che de' celeſti campi
Và più ſempre avenzando, e in alto aſcende,
L'arme percote, e ne trahe fiamme, e lampi
Tremuli, e chiari, onde le viſte offende.
L'aria par di faville intorno avampi,
E quaſi d'alto incendio in forma ſplende,
E co' fieri nitriti il ſuono accorda
Del ferro ſcoſſo, e le campagne aſſorda. I. 73.

Mean time the ſun above th' horizon gains
The riſing circuit of th' ethereal plains;
The poliſh'd arms reflect his dazzling light,
And ſtrike with flaſhing rays the aching ſight.
Thick and more thick the ſparkling gleams aſpire,
Till all the champain ſeems to glow with fire;
While mingled clamours echo through the meads,
The claſh of arms, the neigh of trampling ſteeds. *Hoole.*

But it is one of thoſe things which muſt be ſeen to have an idea of it. There are a thouſand circumſtances which have an effect on the ſpectator which have none on paper. The inſtant of my ſeeing the enemy's army appear at a diſtance (for that of the king was on the ground before my arrival) made a ſtrong impreſſion on me; and, from that moment, at every advance which the two armies made towards each other, the expectation of the ſpectators was heightened, and they were intereſted more and more; the ſilence of their approach was Grecian *. The king's party was defeated; and the order which he maintained in his retreat is inconceivable. In two hours there was only ten

* Οι δ' αρ' ισαν σιγη μενεα πνειοντες Αχαιοι.
In ſolemn ſilence march'd the valiant Grecks.

minutes

minutes confuſion : near the hill where I was, there was an eminence covered with trees, which commanded the field of battle ; each party was deſirous of ſeizing this poſt, and ſome ſquadrons of cavalry came from both ſides full gallop, and ſilent, till the inſtant of their entering the wood ; then they gave loud ſhouts, and fought with ſwords and piſtols : freſh troops came from each ſide to their aſſiſtance, and all ſhouted. The vivacity of that moment is inexpreſſible. As I know nothing of the art military, I cannot give you the particulars of any evolution ; but the regularity and the quickneſs with which the Pruſſian ſoldier performs every thing, aſtoniſh the military of all other nations.

The battle ended, the imagination views theſe pictures of Taſſo :

Pien tutto il campo è di ſpezzate lance,
Di rotti ſcudi, e di troncato arneſe ;
Di ſpade a i petti, a le ſquarciate pance,
Altre conſitte, altre par terra ſteſe ;
Di corpi altri ſupini, altri co' volti,
Quaſi mordendo il ſuolo, al ſuol rivolti.
* *Giace il cavallo al ſuo ſignore appreſſo ;*
Giace il compagno appo il compagno eſtinto ;
Giace il nemico appo il nemico ; e ſpeſſo
Sù'l morto il vivo, il vincitor ſù'l vinto.
Non v'è ſilenzio, e non v'è grido eſpreſſo ;
Mà odi un non sò che roco, e indiſtinto ;
Fremiti di furor, mormori d' ira,
Gemiti di chi langue, e di chi ſpira. XX. 50, 51.

O'erſpread with ſhatter'd arms the ground appears,
With broken bucklers, and with ſhiver'd ſpears.

* It is a tradition among the Italian poets that this ſtanza coſt Taſſo ten months.

Here ſwords are ſtuck in hapleſs warriors kill'd,
And uſeleſs there are ſcatter'd o'er the field.
Here, on their face, the breathleſs bodies lie;
There turn their ghaſtly features to the ſky.
* Beſide his lord the courſer preſs'd the plain;
Beſide his ſlaughter'd friend the friend is ſlain:
Foe near to foe; and on the vanquiſh'd ſpread
The victor lies; the living on the dead!
An undiſtinguiſh'd din is heard around,
Mix'd is the murmur, and confus'd the ſound;
The threats of anger, and the ſoldier's cry,
The groans of thoſe that fall, and thoſe that die. *Hoole.*

The imagination, I ſay, formed theſe pictures, and the heart congratulated itſelf on their being only imaginary.

If I had a great curioſity to ſee two armies engaged, I had much more to ſee the king. At length he came; he was not ſo tall as I expected; this circumſtance excepted, he anſwered all the ideas that I had formed of him: his air and his look beſpoke the king, the hero, and the man of genius. Not being able to ſatisfy myſelf with viewing him, I kept cloſe to him all the way to Sans-ſouci. A prodigious crowd followed him; ſome peaſants waited to ſee him at the entrance of his palace, and cried 'Long live the king!' He often pulled off his hat to them. This was the ſecond time that he deceived me; firſt by his ſtature, and ſecondly by his politeneſs.

LETTER III.

BERLIN.

THE next day there was another battle: the manœuvres were different; but I underſtood nothing of the matter. Before I went to it, I viſited the king's apartments. You go through the eating-parlour and the concert-room into the bed-chamber. I aſked the Swiſs, "Which was the king's chamber?"—'This.' I expected a magnificent bed. There was a handſome cloſet at the end of the room, but no bed in it.—"Where is the bed?"—'There.' Behind a little ſkreen, in a corner, was a very ſmall bed, very narrow, with curtains of green ſilk; this was his. On the other ſide of the caſtle were ſeveral beds in the ſame taſte, then occupied by his generals. The carpet on which he ſteps when he gets out of bed, is very coarſe. There was another ſmall couch, where ſometimes a page ſleeps when the king is ill, and three or four ſtudy tables, all covered with books and papers.

I aſked my conductor (a Swiſs wit, who has lived eighteen years with his majeſty) "where was the king's wardrobe?" He replied, 'On his back*.'

The laſt time of my ſeeing him was at Berlin. He came thither to receive the audience of leave of baron de Swieten, miniſter from their Imperial Majeſties, and to give audience to the new miniſter count de Cobenzl†. The foreign miniſters, the perſons who were to be preſented, and the military, were all that were at court. There were ten of us Engliſh: the king ſpoke to the firſt and the laſt, not on account of their ſituation,

* Dr. Moore has given a liſt of the king's cloaths; [viz. two blue coats, faced with red, the lining of one a little torn; two yellow waiſtcoats, a good deal ſoiled with Spaniſh ſnuff; three pair of yellow breeches, and a ſuit of blue velvet, embroidered with ſilver, for grand occaſions.]

† I had not the honour to know this gentleman, as I left Berlin two days after his arrival: But his couſin, the count de Cobenzl, who attended the emperor in his travels, is one of the moſt amiable and engaging characters in Germany.

but

but becauſe their names ſtruck him. The firſt was major Dalrymple*: To him the king ſaid, 'You have been preſented to 'me before?'—"I aſk your majeſty's pardon: it was my uncle." Mr. Pitt was the laſt. The king, 'Are you a relation of lord 'Chatham?' "Yes, Sir."—'He is a man whom I highly eſteem.'

He then went to the foreign miniſters, and talked more to prince Dolgoroucki, the Ruſſian ambaſſador, than to any other. In the midſt of his converſation with that prince, he ſuddenly turned to Mr. Elliot, the Engliſh miniſter, and aſked him the name of the ducheſs of Kingſton. This tranſition was leſs Pindaric than it appears; he had juſt been ſpeaking of the court of Peterſburg, and that lady was then there.

LETTER IV.

BERLIN.

THERE never was a fat ſoldier ſeen in any country; but the king of Pruſſia has not a fat ſerjeant. A profound knowledge of the œconomy of the finances is one of the points in which this prince excells; this alſo is one of the reaſons why his troops ſcarce ever grow fat. The money which other ſovereigns expend on miſtreſſes, pomp, hunting-parties, &c. he employs on things that are neceſſary, and in rewarding merit. During the time that I was at Berlin, the artillery was exerciſed for a fortnight: an officer of that corps told me, that there was conſumed every day 100 louis d'ors worth of gunpowder. The king is not laviſh of his bounties, but his generoſity to general Leſchwitz,

* Author of "Travels through Spain and Portugal in 1774."

to the widow of colonel Quintus*, and to many other perſons of merit, is well known. Every officer with whom you converſe will give you ſome freſh proof of the liberality of his maſter.

I am fond of my ſubject, and I could write to you a long time of the Great Frederick; but after relating a little anecdote, I will ſay a word of his poetry, and then we will proceed to Dreſden.

Two days after my return from Potſdam, Count * * * *, a French traveller, who lodged at my hôtel, aſked my leave to viſit me. We talked of the city, of the manœuvres, of the king. At ten o'clock at night he entered my apartment:—'My friend,' ſaid he, (he had ſeen me for half an hour that morning) 'I am 'come to take leave of you.'—"Why ſo?"—'The king has 'juſt deſired me to depart, and I know not the reaſon, unleſs it 'be, that when I walk the ſtreets, I take the plan of any build-'ing that ſtrikes me.'—"Has the king ſaid any thing particular "of you?" 'No,' replied he briſkly, 'he has ſaid nothing ill of 'me, but he thinks it nevertheleſs; I have ſent for horſes, and 'I ſhall ſet out in half an hour.' "But," ſaid I, "I do not ſee "the neceſſity of your ſetting out in a night like this," (it rained as faſt as it could pour) "you may wait till to-morrow." 'Par-'don me,' replied he, 'his majeſty may change his mind, to-'morrow perhaps he may aſk me to ſtay.' This foreigner was a ſtranger to every one, even to his own miniſter; he ſeemed well educated, and was about forty.

When a poet has a richneſs of ideas and of expreſſion, every time that we read him we diſcover new beauties: this is the hiſtory of Horace and of the king of Pruſſia. There is not, moſt certainly, an author in the French language who has more thoughts, nor more vigorous thoughts, than this prince. All his productions ſpring from a ſtrong and brilliant imagination,

[* A favourite officer whom the king romaniſed (we cannot ſay chriſtened) by the name of *Quintus Icilius*, on account of his profound knowledge of the Greek and Roman tactics. His real name was Charles Guiſchard.]

always regulated by a ſolid judgment, which, in my opinion, conſtitutes the perfection of genius.

In all his works the moſt ſage philoſophy and the moſt profound morality are blended with the moſt poignant wit and the happieſt ſallies. When his ſubjects admit of it, his ſtyle is no leſs poignant than emphatical. He has *emulated* Horace, and he has been able to equal him even in his beſt pieces; for in many reſpects the Pindar of the North would be diſhonoured by a compariſon with the Latin poet. Horace has not a more ſincere admirer than myſelf, but there are many of his works which I cannot read without diſguſt. One cannot find a ſingle middling compoſition of the King-Poet; and no enthuſiaſt of Horace will deny that he has many; one cannot find in this prince any mean or indecent paſſage; Horace abounds with things that are vulgar and ſhocking. You will anſwer, that the minds of the monarch and of Horace were different, their education was different, and different were their ſituations in life; this adds ſtrength to my aſſertion. I will not always determine in favour of his verſification; but in ſtrength and vivacity of colouring Rubens does not ſurpaſs him.

He has written an epiſtle *on Travelling* *, in order to prevent the young Germans from going to ruin themſelves at Paris and London; in theſe three verſes he ſpeaks of one of thoſe gentlemen † at his return:

De ſtupide qu'il ſut, il eſt devenu fât,
Et jouant l'étourdi, ſans pouvoir jamais l'être,
C'eſt un lourdaut badin qui fait le petit maître.

[* Addreſſed to Count Rottembourg.]

† I cannot help here mentioning a ſtory which I heard at Paris of a young German traveller. He had been told that the Venetian ambaſſador was to make his entry at court, and that it was a magnificent ſight: he flew to Verſailles, he arrived at the chapel-door, from whence he ſaw the chancellor *coming out* in a long blue mantle: he aſks his neighbour, "Pray, Sir, is that cardinal "in blue the Venetian ambaſſador making his *entry*?"

From ſtupid dolt he grows an errant fool,
Acting, not being, a blunderhead complete,
The waggiſh dunce at length becomes a fop.

How many originals of more countries than one does this portrait repreſent!

LETTER V.

BERLIN.

LIGHT and heat are every where diſtinguiſhable in the works of the philoſopher of Sans-ſouci. In two large volumes of his poetry there is not one barren page; and what makes them truly precious is that every page breathes the love of mankind. I know what you ſay, and again I demand one opinion for war, and another for peace. No man was better acquainted with the human heart than Shakſpeare; no man has better drawn characters. This is what he puts into the mouth of an amiable hero:

In peace there's nothing ſo becomes a man
As gentleneſs, and mild humanity;
But when the blaſt of war blows in our ears,
Let us be tigers in our fierce deportment. *Henry V.*

You would think that Shakſpeare had the king of Pruſſia in his eye. Read his odes *on War* and *on the Troubles of the North*, and then judge of the poet and the man:

[When

[When will thy frantic rage, with ruthleſs hand,
Bellona, ceaſe to deſolate the land?
Why do we ſee on every plain and flood
Such torrents laviſh'd of heroic blood?
O'er all the earth, with unreſiſted ſway,
Sword, fire, confuſion, plunder, famine, reign,
Nor can the boundleſs ocean aught ſurvey
But wrecks of ſhips deſtroy'd, and corſes of the ſlain.

Say, does this fiend, with front of braſs endued,
Of blood inſatiate, though with blood imbrued,
This fiend of war, the world in fetters hold,
Only to range and waſte it uncontroul'd?
Old Charon's wherry ſuch enormous weight
Ne'er yet ſuſtain'd, nor were the fatal ſheers
So oft employ'd, of unrelenting Fate,
To ſnap the vital threads that hold our warriors years.

Inhuman Diſcord, red with carnage, ſhakes
Her flaming torch, and irritates her ſnakes,
And, fond of chaos, with eternal ſtrife
Embroils all nature, and imbitters life:
Man's erring ſteps from gulph to gulph ſhe leads,
And death, deſpair, and treaſon, all the crimes
Which follow and avenge ſuch cruel deeds,
O'erſpread with cypreſs all our deſolated climes.]

*What tranſports ſeize my ſoul! what ſudden fires!
Some god my ſenſes ſteals, ſome god inſpires;
'Tis Phœbus' ſelf, his heav'n-born genius deigns
To teach my feeble voice immortal ſtrains.
Let all the world an awful ſilence keep,
Ye kings, ye people, liſten to my lay,
And let awhile your frantic fury ſleep,
To hear the truths I ſing, to hear them and obey.

[* Mr. Sherlock has quoted only the four following ſtanzas; but the tranſlator has given the whole ode.]

Ye

Ye judges of mankind, their gods by birth,
Ye proud oppreſſors of this wretched earth,
Though by your hands dire thunderbolts are thrown,
Though in your chains theſe captive people groan;
Reſtrain the rigour of reſiſtleſs force:
Theſe are your children, feel what fathers feel:
From all their boſoms, ſtabb'd without remorſe,
Streams your own vital flood, and ſtains the murd'rous ſteel.

As a good ſhepherd, provident and wiſe,
Defends his darling flock, with watchful eyes,
From the wolf's ravenous jaws, with gore imbrued,
Or the fierce lion, prowling for his food,
When from the wood the tyrant flies, their fears
Remov'd, they ſoundly ſleep or ſafely feed,
And though his ſheep with fondling hand he ſhears,
Yet ne'er beneath his knife the harmleſs victims bleed.

A tender monarch, like this ſhepherd ſwain,
Humane in counſels, in deſigns humane,
For public good alone prolongs his days,
And counts his years by deeds deſerving praiſe:
Wreaths ſtain'd with blood he nobly ſcorns to wear;
But to his virtues future glory owes;
Such was that ancient, that heroic pair,
Aurelius, Titus thus to deathleſs honours roſe.

[Abhorr'd be theſe inteſtine wars, theſe brands
So widely ſcatter'd by Ambition's hands:
See! all the univerſe in ruins lies;
Earth is a tomb of vaſt ſtupendous ſize:
What tragic ſcenes this theatre diſgrace!
Europe againſt her ſons, with ſtep-dame hate,
Leads forth aſtoniſh'd Aſia's powerful race,
To urge with ſpeedier courſe the direful work of fate.

Barbarians

Barbarians ſwarming from Siberia's coaſts,
Aſſaſſins nurs'd amidſt eternal froſts,
Caſpians and Tartars, join'd in dread array,
I ſee, retain'd in Dutch and German* pay:
This ſavage rage what Dæmon can inſpire!
Europe no more your fury can ſuſtain,
With fierce diſſenſion other worlds to fire,
A luſt for fighting fields tranſports you o'er the main.

From your bright manſion in yon azure ſky,
Goddeſs, on whom for bliſs we all rely,
So long deſir'd, deſcend, O lovely Peace!
Cloſe Janus' dreadful gates, bid Diſcord ceaſe;
All intereſt, envy, baniſh, and reſtore
To worth, to arts, that fame, that life they want;
Then we, amidſt our laurels ſtain'd with gore,
Thy myrtles and thy olives joyfully will plant.]

His *Art of War* is his maſter-piece, and the longeſt of his works. You will there find the moſt lively images, the boldeſt and moſt judicious metaphors, a touch always manly, always majeſtic, and an impetuoſity in his ſtyle which is irreſiſtible.

When one thinks of all the proofs which this prince has given in war and in politics, of the fertility of his imagination, and of the ſolidity of his judgment; when one remembers that he has always nouriſhed his genius with the moſt perfect productions of the ancient philoſophers and poets; and when we know that he has added to this whatever could be found in the ſociety of the moſt intelligent men and the greateſt geniuſes of his age; we ſhall no longer be aſtoniſhed at the variety of merit

[* The author might with much more reaſon have ſaid Britiſh! This ſeems to fix the date of the ode to the year 1748, when the Ruſſians were marching to Flanders, which haſtened the peace.]

that

that is found in his compoſitions. Accept, great king, theſe juſt encomimus; I ſhould not have ſo highly applauded your talents, if I had not been fully perſuaded of the goodneſs of your heart.

Reçois l'eloge pur, l'hommage merité,
Je le dois à ton nom, comme à la verité.

Art de la Guerre.

Receive this pure applauſe, this homage due
To your great name, becauſe I know 'tis true.

Read his *Epiſtle to his Siſter of Bareith, on her Illneſs*, and ſee whether every verſe does not flow from a tender and feeling heart.

It will be ſaid, that there are faults in his poetry; I leave them for the Zoiluſes to take up; and I ſhall cloſe my letter with his addreſs to young ſoldiers at the concluſion of his *Art of War*.

Si votre cœur aſpire à la ſublime gloire,
Sachez vaincre et ſur-tout uſer de la victoire;
Le plus grand des Romains, par ſes ſuccès divers,*
Le jour qu'à ſon pouvoir il ſoumit l' univers,
Sauva ſes ennemis dans les champs de Pharſale.
Voyez à Fontenoy LOUIS *dont l'ame égale,*
Douce dans ſes ſuccès ſoulage les vaincus,
C'eſt un Dieu bienfaiſant dont ils ſont ſécourus;
Ils baiſent en pleurant la main qui les déſarme,
Sa valeur les ſoumet, ſa clémence les charme,
Dans le ſein des fureurs la bonté trouve lieu,
Si vaincre eſt d'un héros, pardonner eſt d'un Dieu.

* Comme politique, ecrivain, et conquérant.

To heights of glory if your heart aſpires,
Know how to conquer, and your conqueſt uſe:
The greateſt, moſt ſucceſsful* Roman chief,
On that fam'd day when he ſubdu'd the world,
Sav'd ev'n his foes in dire Pharſalia's field.
Lewis with equal mind at Fontenoy,
Mild in ſucceſs, his vanquiſh'd foes conſoles;
Like a good deity his aid he gives:
With tears they bathe the hand that has diſarm'd them;
His valour conquers, and his mercy charms:
With goodneſs war's dire horrors he allays;
Heroes may vanquiſh, but 'tis God forgives.

LETTER VI.

DRESDEN.

THE country of Saxony is very beautiful, the city of Dreſden very pretty, and the court one of the moſt amiable in Germany: civility to ſtrangers is there carried to the utmoſt height; the women are lively, good-natured, witty; the climate is fine; the environs pleaſant; the entertainment delicate: it is indeed a delicious country, and the Saxons would be too happy if they had not a hero for their neighbour. Ah! that of a hero or a volcano is a bad neighbourhood. The ſituation of Dreſden reſembles that of Portici; and the inhabitants tremble at a menace of Frederick, like thoſe of Portici at a rumbling of Veſuvius.

* As a politician, a writer, and a conqueror.

An old woman ſpoke to me with the ſame horror* at the recollection of the bombardment of the city in the laſt war, and almoſt in the ſame terms, as an old man at Portici mentioned to me the terrible eruption of 1768.

Nothing gives ſo perfect an image of war as the lava. Imagine a rich country covered with vines, paſtures, and corn: a torrent of fire comes forth, and in an inſtant the moſt brilliant landſcape is changed into the moſt diſmal picture that nature can preſent. This is the hiſtory of an eruption of Veſuvius: this is that of the Palatinate ſet on fire by Turenne.

Travellers in general make too ſhort a ſtay at Dræſden, and they are in the wrong. It is a country highly intereſting to all who are fond of natural hiſtory, pictures, and the beauties of nature of every kind. If the Pruſſians are the Macedonians of Germany, the Saxons are its Athenians. I have ſcarcely ſeen a country where there is more taſte, or more chearful and agreeable ſociety.

It is at the Vatican that we learn to admire the maſter-pieces of Raphael; it is at Dreſden that we learn to value the pictures of Corregio. Raphael is almoſt univerſally acknowledged as the monarch of the pictureſque kingdom. A conſular government would pleaſe me better; I would wiſh him to have Corregio for his colleague. I know that I ſhall have all the demi-connoiſſeurs againſt me, and I will tell them the reaſon; either they have not ſeen the moſt beautiful paintings of this maſter, or they have ſeen them ſuperficially. His beſt works are at Parma and Dreſden, and theſe are two cities that the traveller ſees poſt. He paſſes three mornings perhaps in that gallery; he will ſee every thing, and conſequently ſees nothing. It is the ſame repetition at Parma, and behold him now arrived at Rome. In all the companies where he goes, when painting is the ſubject, he hears

* *Mens meminiſſe horret.*

no one named but Raphael. If a foreigner mentions Corregio, the Romans ſay, that he has great merit; but they are not ſenſible of what they ſay; for they have only ſeen ſome pictures of his, extremely moderate, that are at Rome: theſe pictures they compare with the maſter-pieces of Raphael; and you may gueſs their inference. The truth is, that they eſteem Corregio as many modern philoſophers adore Newton, by hear-ſay. To determine right, the *Night** ſhould be placed beſide the *Transfiguration*; the *Magdalen*†, or the *Venus*‡, by the *Galatea*; the *St. Jerom*, the *St. George*, or the *St. Sebaſtian*, beſide the *School of Athens*, and the other pictures of the Vatican.

The Romans are not good judges of painting; they determine well of certain parts. In every thing relating to compoſition and deſign their feeling is acute; and in thoſe two points Raphael had no equal. As to colouring, of that they know little: accuſtomed to conſider Raphael as a perfect model, they think his colouring alſo perfect; but the falſhood of this idea is too notorious for me to mention it. I do not pretend to talk of painting like an artiſt; but I have much ſtudied pictures, and I ſhall always think that one of the firſt objects of painting is to deceive the eye, and to make the ſpectator believe that the figures which are on the canvaſs are not there; in this part of the art Corregio is unrivalled. The magic of his pencil abſolutely detaches his figures from the cloth; and, with this relief, they have an amazing ſubſtance. Nothing can be farther from my thoughts than the diminiſhing the merit of Raphael; it is too well eſtabliſhed,

[* The famous *Notte di Corregio*, a nativity, is in the duke's palace at Modena: It is ſo far a night-piece as that all the light of the picture flows from the infant, who ſeems perfectly to ſhine. . . . This thought has been followed by great numbers of others. *Wright.*

The late general Guiſe, equally famous for his oaths and his connoiſſeurſhip, uſed to ſwear that this picture alone would illuminate a dark room.]

[† This is alſo at Modena. It is a Magdalen lying along and reading, with her head raiſed up, and ſupported by her right hand. It is moſt highly finiſhed, but rather over-laboured. This famous picture is cloſeted up, and when ſhewn is brought forth with great ſolemnity. *Wright.*]

‡ An ineſtimable picture in the poſſeſſion of Sir William Hamilton.

and if I could prove that he had none, I do not ſee that that would add to the reputation of Corregio. All that I aſk is to be allowed that there are two fine eyes and two fine eyes; which travellers will not allow, for the reaſon that I have mentioned, becauſe they have formed their taſte at Rome, and at Rome Corregio is not known.

We ſhall have another reaſon for extolling Corregio, when we compare his ſituation with that of Raphael. Poor and unconnected, he lived in a ſmall town where he had no maſter but his own genius, no model but nature, no attendants but the Graces, and the neceſſity of procuring bread for his family, to ſtimulate him. Behold Raphael at Rome, patroniſed by the ſovereign, courted (in conſequence) by princes and cardinals, hoping to be a cardinal himſelf, ſurrounded with the works of the Greeks, and by great artiſts his rivals, who, by their criticiſms, at once incited and improved him. What advantages over the poor and amiable Corregio! who was obliged to go on foot to Parma, carrying on his back his excellent works, of which one at preſent forms the riches of a cabinet.

No painter ever deſigned like Raphael; no painter knew the *clair-obſcur* ſo well as Corregio: Raphael is always correct and noble; Corregio has often ſome negligences: Raphael took many ideas from the ancient ſtatues and bas-reliefs; Corregio pillaged only nature; Raphael has all the majeſtic, Corregio all the amiable, graces; the queſtion cannot be decided; Raphael is Juno with the girdle of Venus; Corregio is Venus herſelf.

There is a ſaying of this painter which has always pleaſed me: The Bologneſe had deſired Raphael to paint them a picture; he gave them the celebrated St. Cecilia*. The fame of this work brought Corregio to Bologna to ſee it; after gazing on it

[* This picture is in the church of S. *Giovanni in Monte*. The Saint, enraptured with the harmony of a choir of angels, daſhes all her muſical inſtruments againſt the ground. *Keyſler*.]

for

for half an hour in a profound ſilence, he ſaid, ‘ *And I too am* ‘ *a painter*.’ Yes, enchanting artiſt, you might well ſay ſo; and while men truſt to their eyes, and to what they feel, many will be of your opinion. This expreſſion is delightful, it ſhews me the man; it is a great talent to ſee without jealouſy the maſterpiece of a contemporary, which dares to do him juſtice, and which, at the ſame time, ſenſible of its own merit, exclaims with a noble and modeſt ſimplicity, ‘And I alſo have genius!’ Monteſquieu was ſtruck with it in like manner; “ When I have “ ſeen*, ſays he, what ſo many great men in France, in En- “ gland, and in Germany, have writ before me, I have been in “ admiration, but I have not loſt my courage; *and I too am a* “ *painter* †, I exclaim with Corregio.”

LETTER VII.

VIENNA, *March* 3, 1778.

HOW rich is the univerſe in delights! How many pleaſures may a virtuous and prudent man enjoy in his travels! If his view be to ſeek for amiable and intelligent characters, he will find them every where; and if he knows how to value them, they will well entertain him. Vienna has its beautiful ſides; the national character is in general good, and thoſe whoſe education is the leaſt cultivated may there be ſafely truſted. Its air is healthy, ſharp, dry, and very cold. The ideas which moſt ſtrike foreigners are the affability of the court, the magnificence of the entertainments, and the beauty of the fair ſex. Three

* Preface to the *Spirit of Laws*.

† *Ed anch' Io ſon pittore*.

days

days after my arrival I was at a ball, where there were thirty young ladies, ſome handſomer than others; they dreſs with great taſte, and dance well. The beſt dancer was the counteſs Dirheim. She is a canoneſs, and the moſt beautiful canoneſs that ever was ſeen. Of all the perſons I have ever ſeen, ſhe has the moſt effect at firſt ſight. A painter could find only one fault in her, and that fault is a ſmall one. If I were a poet, I would here draw her picture, but Arioſto has done it; it is his Alcina:

Di perſona era tanto ben formata,
Quanto mè' finger ſan pittori induſtri, &c.

A ſhape whoſe like in wax 'twere hard to frame,
Or to expreſs by ſkill of painters rare, &c.

You never ſaw ſo pretty a mouth; this ſtanza ſeems made on purpoſe to paint it:

Sotto quel ſta, quaſi fra due vallette,
La bocca ſparſa di natio cinabro;
Quive due filze ſon di perle elette,
Che chiude ed apre un bello e dolce labro;
Quindi eſcon le corteſi parolette
Da render molle ogni cor rozzo e ſcabro;
Quivi ſi forma quel ſoave riſo,
Ch' apre a ſua poſta in terra il Paradiſo. VII. 13.

Conjoin'd to which in due and comely ſpace
Doth ſtand the mouth ſtain'd with vermillion hue,
Two rows of precious pearl ſerve, in their place,
To ſhew and ſhut a lip right fair to view:
Hence come the courteous words, and full of grace,
That mollify hard hearts, and make them new:
From hence proceed thoſe ſmilings ſweet and nice,
That ſeem to make an earthly Paradiſe. *Harrington.*

The

The Princeſs Charles Lichtenſtein, the Counteſs Paar, and the Princeſs Lignoſki, are the three handſomeſt women in Germany; the Counteſs Wurmbrand, and the Counteſs Búquoy, are the two prettieſt women in Vienna; the Counteſs Roſs at Dreſden is the third prettieſt German woman that I have ſeen. There may perhaps be a prettier face than that of the Counteſs of Wurmbrand in Paradiſe, but on earth there certainly is not.

As to wit, the Counteſs Bergen has unqueſtionably the moſt; the Counteſs Degenfield, wife of the Dutch envoy, is highly accompliſhed and amiable; and the Baroneſs of Rheiſhach has as much real merit as I have ſeen in my travels, a great deal of wit, an improved underſtanding, and a good heart; ſhe is, in ſhort, a charming woman in every ſenſe of the word.

You will ſee in Prince Kaunitz a ſuperior genius, and one of the greateſt men of the age. He gives a moſt gracious reception to the Engliſh, and has ſome of them every day at his table. His houſe is open every evening, and there you will always find part of the diplomatic body, which here is very numerous and reſpectable. Monſeigneur Geramoi, the Pope's Nuncio, is full of good-nature and erudition. He is much beloved at Vienna and at Rome, and with reaſon. There is not an Engliſhman, or any man who ſpeaks truth, who paſſes through Vienna, without doing juſtice to Sir Robert Keith. He is indiſputably one of the firſt geniuſes in Europe: his ſoul and his underſtanding appear in his eye; a clear, quick, penetrating, ſtrong eye. Few men poſſeſs like him the ſecret of pleaſing every one.

The houſhold of Baron de Breteuil is royally eſtabliſhed. We were five and twenty Engliſh, and that ambaſſador invited us all every week of the Carnaval to a ball and a ſupper. There were always there more than 200 perſons, excellent cheer, French wines, Tokay, &c. &c. There is no houſe here more agreeable than his. No idea, I confeſs, has given me more offence, in

many young travellers of different nations with whom I have met, than that of not doing juſtice to perſons of diſtinguiſhed merit. This mode of acting appears to me baſe and unworthy of a man well born, even if thoſe perſons were unknown to us; but it is the height of ingratitude to ſpeak ill of thoſe who have ſhewn us civilities, to diſown their favours, or even to be ſilent when an occaſion offers of ſpeaking of them.

Vienna is perhaps the beſt city in Europe to teach a young traveller the cuſtoms of the great world: at his arrival he will be introduced into all the beſt houſes, and if he is an Engliſhman, he will meet with the moſt flattering reception, becauſe Sir Robert Keith, who is univerſally eſteemed, accompanies him every where; but every foreigner is well received, eſpecially by the ladies, who are very well bred, and extremely amiable.

You will afterwards be entertained according to your deſert; if you are ſimple in your manners, and noble in all your proceedings, you will be enchanted with Vienna; and if, when you leave the country, you do not make its elogium, you will be your own ſatiriſt.

LETTER VIII.

VIENNA.

THERE are here a German theatre and an Italian one, both bad. There is only one woman* who has merit. Though ſhe has neither beauty nor air, ſhe plays with ſuch judgment, and has ſuch an expreſſion in her looks, her actions, and her cadence, that ſhe even intereſts thoſe who are unacquainted with the language.

* *La Sacco.*

You

You will here ſee ſome ſingular ſights; the proceſſion of the knights of the golden fleece is ſuperb; the Hungarian guards, who come to court on New-year's day, are the moſt brilliant troop in Europe; but the moſt ſtriking ſight, and which is really beautiful, is the courſe of ſledges. The Archdutcheſs of Milan, the Archdutcheſs Mary-Elizabeth, and the Princeſs Schwarzenberg, were led by the Archduke of Milan, the Archduke Maximilian, and Prince Albert of Saxony: they were followed by twenty-five ladies, all in crimſon velvet with a very broad gold lace; the dreſſes of the knights were of a ſky-blue velvet, laced like thoſe of the ladies. There were ſome equipages that coſt 1000 louis. On each ſide of the horſe were two running-footmen, dreſſed with an elegance ſuitable to the equipage.

This is one of the happy moments in the life of a Vienneſe lady; it is the moment in which ſhe makes the moſt pompous diſplay of her riches and of her charms. Embelliſhed with all her graces, her head ſtudded with diamonds, her boſom open, ſhe ſeems a Venus in her car; and knowing that ſhe is the object of the admiration of ſome thouſands of perſons, ſhe ſhews her heart's content by a perpetual ſmile. In every country the fair go dreſſed out to public places to be ſeen*; but here the women make the ſhow, and the pleaſure with which this idea inſpires them is ſo lively, that it makes them entirely forget the rigours of the ſeaſon. It is not ſo with the poor knight; having no enjoyment, but that of admiring the nape of his fair-one's neck, he periſhes with cold: in fact, ſome men have been frequently obliged to retire before the expiration of theſe two hours, on account of the ſeverity of the cold; but no woman was ever known to complain of it.

The courſe begins in the great ſquare before the Imperial palace; they take ſeveral turns there, and after traverſing the

* *Spectatum* [ornatæ] *veniunt, ſpectentur ut ipſæ.*

principal ſtreets of the city, they return thither to finiſh it by other turns. The ground of ſnow, on which this moving picture winds, relieves its ſplendor extremely, and makes the ſight the richeſt and moſt dazzling that can be conceived.

But the ſight that gives a foreigner the moſt pleaſure at Vienna, is that which he ſees in the anti-chamber of prince Kaunitz, once a week, after dinner: it is a concourſe of all the indigent who are in need of protection, and who come thither aſſured of finding it: the ear of that prince is never ſhut to the complaints of the poor, and his hand is always ready to give them aſſiſtance.

LETTER IX.

VIENNA.

ONE muſt not leave Vienna without ſeeing Metaſtaſio: he is a lively old man and an agreeable companion. He is the greateſt poet that Italy has produced ſince Taſſo: I would have ſaid the greateſt that ſhe has ever had, were he not a living author; on which account he muſt not be praiſed too much. Read his *Canzonettes*, in particular that which begins *Grazie agl' inganni tuoi**, and ſay, what Italian poet has written with ſo much purity, ſo much elegance, and ſo much grace? He embelliſhes whatever he touches, and to me he appears abſolutely the firſt that has eſtabliſhed true principles of good taſte in Italy. In thoſe little compoſitions there is a native beauty and freſhneſs in the colouring, a ſimplicity and delicacy in the thoughts and ſentiments, that makes them enchanting.

[* *The Indifferent.* See three good tranſlations of this Ode in Dodſley's Poems, vol. II. by the Rev. Mr. Seward, Richard Roderick, eſq. and an unknown hand.]

Metaſtaſio

Metaſtaſio is not wanting in any one of the talents that conſtitute a great poet. Born with good ſenſe, with a profound and penetrating genius, and a lively and fruitful imagination, he poſſeſſed all that he could derive from nature: at twelve years of age he went into the family of the celebrated Gravina: that learned man, who ſaw the *tinſel*, the *ſparkling fooleries*, and the *barren abundance* of the Italian writers, ſhewed Metaſtaſio that the true ſource of a certain taſte was the Greek authors. The young pupil caught this idea thoroughly, examined the principles of thoſe poets, and on their principles he has laboured all his life. Italy is at preſent incapable of inſpiring ſublime ſentiments; it gives a competent knowledge of the tender paſſions: in Italy he paſſed his youth; there he learned to write his *Demetrio*, his *Olympiade*, and his *Demofoonte*. At the age of twenty-five he went into Germany; his reſidence at Vienna, and the reading of Corneille, elevated his mind; he wrote his *Regulo* and his *Clemenza di Tito:* no author has better underſtood Horace; few poets have ſo well executed his ideas.

Scribendi recte ſapere eſt et principium et fons:

Sound judgment is the ground of writing well.

Roſcommon.

He ſtudied philoſophy; and he did not begin to treat of a ſubject till he had thoroughly examined it.

Omne ſupervacuum pleno de pectore manat,

All ſuperfluities are ſoon forgot, *Roſcommon.*

is an obſervation, of which he knows the wiſdom; and he has written with as much rapidity as preciſion.

He has been as ſenſible of the value of Boileau as of Horace; and he has never ſwerved from thoſe great principles:

Tout doit tendre au bon-ſens;
Rien n'eſt beau que le vrai, le vrai ſeul eſt aimable.

Let ſenſe be ever in your view;
Nothing is beautiful that is not true;
The true alone is lovely.

The perſons who have compoſed the muſic for his verſes, and thoſe who ſing and repeat them, are beſt able to judge of the harmony of his poetry: in theſe two claſſes there is only one opinion from Peterſburg to Naples.

No Italian has ſo well developed the emotions of the ſoul, nor has had ſuch ſucceſs in moving and intereſting his reader. Metaſtaſio roſe to the ſublime; but he was born with tenderneſs; and it may be ſaid, without wronging any nation, be it who it will, that few of their poets have ſo well painted the tender paſſions, and made ſuch ſtrong impreſſions on the heart.

When one cloſely examines his works, and compares them with the Gothic productions of Dante, with the abſurdities of Arioſto, with the extravagances of Marini, and with the puerilities of Taſſo, one is aſtoniſhed at the deciſion of the Italians: they prefer Taſſo to Metaſtaſio, and Arioſto to Taſſo; but there is no method of diſputing with the Italians in regard to poetry; as they deny all the principles admitted in every other country.

I am far from ſpeaking here againſt the talents of the Italians; they have infinitely more, in my opinion, than any other nation in Europe; but theſe talents are uncultivated, and of many reaſons

reaſons the moſt eſſential is, that the country is deſtitute of Mæcenaſes.

I hope you no longer think that I deny that Dante had an aſtoniſhing genius, and that he has ſome paſſages of the higheſt ſublime; that the genius of Arioſto was quick and fertile; that no one tells a ſtory better; that he has ſome deſcriptions exquiſitely beautiful; and that his *Orlando Furioſo* is a poem full of mirth and variety. Marini had a vaſt imagination; but he is madder than Arioſto.

I am only the friend of truth, and if I do not deny the merit of theſe poets, much leſs ſhall I deny that of Taſſo. Nature perhaps was leſs generous to him than to them; but his poems would be placed above theirs at Paris, at London, and at Athens. That the *Jeruſalem Delivered* has many faults, that it has falſe thoughts, ſome play of words, and much tinſel, is certain; but it is alſo certain that it has much gold. The ſubject is moſt happy; the conduct of the poem in general is diſcreet; its ſtep, majeſtic; its language, noble and well ſupported, and its verſification always beautiful: it has the pathetic, and it has the ſublime. The *Aminta* is a maſter-piece of elegance and ſublimity, and much more perfect than the *Gieruſalemme Liberata*.

Metaſtaſio ſeems to me to have more natural talents than Taſſo, all his beauties, and many more, and none of his faults. He ſatisfies the mind, he delights, he enchants the imagination, he captivates the heart; and for theſe reaſons he will always be the poet of men of ſenſe, the poet of the women, and the poet of all perſons who have taſte.

LETTER X.

THE HAGUE, *June* 10, 1777.

THE face of the country in Holland is ſingular, and very ſtriking for three days: after that time, one ſees nothing but the ſame flat repetition of fields always level, interſected by canals which are all alike; and on thoſe canals barks all made on the ſame model. Every traveller ſhould paſs through Holland, as the ideas which it gives him ariſe no where elſe, and he will ſoon collect them. Throughout Holland the four elements are bad; the cardinal virtue of the country is property; the deities adored, Mercury and Plutus; but as for Apollo and the Nine Siſters, one never hears them named.

Their ſchool of painting deſerves to be viewed, in order to have an idea of the height to which the mechaniſm of the art may be carried. Their finiſh is muchmore perfect than that of the Italians; but as they only ſervilely copy an unfruitful nature, one of their pictures never makes us wiſh to ſee it again. The abſolute want of taſte makes them deſpiſe all that belongs to the Italian ſchool; the antique is with them a ridiculous term; and if an artiſt were to labour there on thoſe ideas, he would be ſtarved. In a cabinet at Amſterdam I recollected what Lewis XIV. ſaid of a picture of a Dutch banquet, full of all thoſe diſguſting ideas which accompany a drunken debauch, '*Take away thoſe baboons.*' This expreſſion is worthy of the age of Boileau, Moliere, and Racine, in which the imitations of beautiful and noble nature alone could pleaſe. This picture was by one of the firſt maſters, and perfectly well painted; but if the nature that is choſen be diſguſting, the more perfect the imitation is, the more offenſive is the picture; and thoſe who can admire ſuch productions have a mean and depraved taſte.

The

The taſte of the age of Lewis XIV. no longer exiſts in France: the Dutch pictures are thoſe which are moſt in faſhion, and they ſell at Paris at an incredible price. It is ſhameful for the French, who have a native delicacy, and who have ſuch collections as thoſe of Verſailles, the Luxembourg, and the *Palais Royal*, to ſuffer themſelves to be led away by the moſt diſgraceful faſhion that they have ever adopted.

Rubens, to whom nature by miſtake gave birth in their neighbourhood, is not reliſhed by the Dutch; and as a proof of it, there is no young painter who imitates him. If they value his pictures, it is becauſe they ſell well; and if ſome of his pictures ſtill remain among them, it is becauſe travellers will not give ſix times more for them than they are worth.

There is one object only in this country with which you will be much pleaſed; that is, Sir Joſeph Yorke: the King of England is well repreſented in all the courts that I have ſeen; but certainly he has no repreſentative that does him more honour than this ambaſſador. His merit alone draws from me this elogium; for he has ſhewn only common civilities to a man without a title, who is modeſt to an extreme, and who has no other merit than that of being highly ſenſible of the merit of others.

All great men have many perſons who are envious of them; Sir Joſeph Yorke muſt have more than others; but his is the *only* character in Europe againſt which I have not heard a ſingle word. Dignity and good-nature are in him united in the higheſt degree; his converſation is moſt brilliant, and his manners moſt polite.

I have had the honour of ſupping in many courts; but I never ſaw a more magnificent entertainment than the ſupper which he gave to the nobility at the Hague on the 4th of June, 1777.

LETTER XI.

ROME, *October* 1, 1778.

MAGNIFICENCE, hypocriſy, and ſadneſs, reign here: the number of fine palaces, of beautiful churches, of ſuperb fountains, of treaſures of art, and venerable remains of antiquity, give an air of grandeur to Rome which is not found in any other country.

The want of public entertainments, the little population in proportion to the extent of the city, and its ſituation, ſurrounded by hills which prevent a free circulation of air, added to the oppreſſive * weight of the *Scirocco* wind, ſeem to me the chief cauſes of its real ſadneſs; but what increaſes this apparent gloom, is the air of ſanctity which the Romans affect, and the general dreſs of the country, which is black. The habit of an abbé is the court dreſs; and as it is alſo the cheapeſt, every one wears it.

Every court is the abode of diſſimulation; at Rome there are as many courts as cardinals; every cardinal is a kind of prince, and may become a ſovereign; this reaſon alone may convince you that this country muſt have more men in maſks than any other.

Of all the ſovereigns whom I have ſeen, the pope acts majeſty the beſt; the cardinals are like Martial's epigrams, there are ſome good, ſome bad, and many indifferent. Almoſt all of them derive honour from their rank; the cardinal de Bernis is an exception, he does honour to the purple by his virtues and his talents.

* This is the '*Plumbeus Auſter*' of Horace.

The

The women are reſerved in public, and wanton in private; the prelates, effeminate; the nobility *, illiterate; and the people, wicked.

The ſtudies generally purſued are, the laws, antiquities, and divinity, becauſe theſe are the three principal roads that here lead to fortune. A poet is conſidered as a † dangerous, or at leaſt an uſeleſs, being, and for this reaſon a poetical talent is rather oppreſſed than encouraged. Metaſtaſio could not there find bread.

You would often have occaſion to admire the genius of Corneille for the truth with which he has drawn the Roman women. The aſſurance of their eye, the firmneſs of their ſtep, every turn of their form, and every motion of their body, declare the courage of their ſouls. They have a very noble look, which is heightened by trailing robes, which they all wear, down to the women of the third degree.

The nation has ſomething like pride, which does not diſpleaſe me; it is the haughtineſs of a man of an ancient family fallen to decay. But it has a deſire of concealing itſelf, which pleaſes no one. The firſt proverb of the country is, ‡ *He who knows not how to diſſemble, knows not how to live*; and they all know how to live. They love obſcurity in every thing, and though this idea may ſeem to you trifling, it is not ſo: Rome is the worſt lighted city in Europe; the ſervants do not carry flambeaux, and the firſt princes of the country, in other reſpects extremely luxurious, only carry a ſmall dark lanthorn behind their coaches.

The Roman has naturally a profound genius and a ſtrongly marked character; he is eaſily moved, and when he is moved, he is violent to an extreme. If the dreſs of the country were

* The Duke of Ceri, the Marqueſs of Maccarani, and two or three more, are exceptions.
† *Fœnum habet in cornu, aiunt.*
‡ *Chi non ſa fingere, non ſa vivere.*

 military,

military, as you walk the ſtreets you would think yourſelf in ancient Rome; the faces that you meet ſo much reſemble the characters that hiſtory has tranſmitted to us. This idea has often ſtruck me among the men, and it is ſtill more ſtriking in the women. You will often ſay, 'There is a woman who 'might well be the mother of a Gracchus, and there is another 'who might produce a Sylla!' The number of Meſſalinas is ſmall, that of Lucretias leſs, and of * Sempronias you will find ſome rather at Naples than at Rome.

The following is a mark of national diſtinction between a Roman and a Neapolitan woman: a woman of Naples is leſs modeſt than one of Rome, and more baſhful; Neapolitan women have been often ſeen to bluſh, but it is not poſſible to put a Roman woman out of countenance.

This is a ſlight ſketch of the preſent ſtate of that

Rome, dont le deſtin dans la paix, dans la guerre,
Eſt d'être en tous les temps maîtreſſe de la terre:
Rome, ever doom'd by fate in peace, in war,
To be the miſtreſs of the world;

And where at preſent

Des prêtres fortunés foulent d'un pied tranquille
Les tombeaux des Catons et la cendre d'Emile:
Prieſts, happy prieſts, with tranquil footſteps tread
On tombs and aſhes of the mighty dead.

But in my ſketch I may eaſily be miſtaken; for of all the countries that I have ſeen, this is the moſt difficult to know.

* *Qui ſæpius petunt viros quam petuntur.*

LETTER XII.

ROME.

THE point of ſight at which appears the moſt perfect union of the ſublime and beautiful in nature, is from the top of Veſuvius. The point of ſight at which appears the moſt perfect union of the ſublime and beautiful in art, is in the court of the Apollo of Belvedere. From the former one ſees the gulph of the volcano, fields deſolated by rivers of lava now frozen, a country of vineyards of conſiderable extent, diverſified by the moſt beautiful mixture of plains and hills, the city of Naples, the hill of Poſilipo, a number of iſlands ſcattered in a vaſt ſea, &c.

In the court one ſees the Apollo, the Laocoon, the Antinöus, and the celebrated *Torſo* of Hercules *, which is called 'the Torſo of Michael Angelo,' on account of the admiration in which he held that precious fragment. Here we perceive what the Greek nation was. Let me not be told of prejudice for the ancients; I have none; I only do juſtice to the merit of things, and it is very indifferent to me where they are found, or who are their authors. To be juſt, one muſt ſometimes appear extravagant: when an object is tranſcendently beautiful or great, ſuitable encomiums muſt be given to it. The pen of man cannot do juſtice to the poetry of Shakſpeare, to the genius of the King of Pruſſia, or to the works of the Greeks. Many, I know, will condemn me for this laſt expreſſion; I refuſe them all as judges; they will condemn me only becauſe they know not my ſubjects.

[* A mutilated antique ſtatue, of which there are now left only the body and thighs. *Wright.*]

In the Belvedere then, I ſay, one ſees the ſuperiority of the Greeks to all the nations of the world. The diſtance that is between the Apollo, the Laocoon, and all the beſt works of the French and the Italians, is ſo great, that it is almoſt ridiculous to name them together.

Let the young traveller, when he views the Apollo, recollect that what he ſees has been a *rude* block of marble. The firſt ſtep for the artiſt was to create the character of that god. Therefore, before the marble was touched, the ſculptor had made ſo great an effort of genius, that all the men who have ſucceeded him, even to this moment, have never been able to make one like it. This elogium, you ſay, is too ſtrong; it is not an elogium; it is a fact that I relate: if the fact be not true, name me a ſtatue equal in invention. Shall it be the *Suſanna of Fiammingo, the Juſtice of Guilielmo della Porta, the Santa Bibiena of Bernini †, or ſhall it be the Moſes ‡ of Michael Angelo? I do not ſuppoſe that any men of ſenſe ever compares them. The Moſes is not inferior to any Italian or French ſtatue; but if one had not ſeen the Torſo, from which it is evident that Michael Angelo took the original idea of his ſtatue, one would never be aſtoniſhed at the invention of that production. The invention of the Apollo aſtoniſhes all men, and that in proportion to the time and attention with which they examine it.

The Apollo of Bernini, notwithſtanding all its faults, is a fine ſtatue; it appears moderate only becauſe we compare it (often imperceptibly) with the Apollo of Belvedere. The Apollo of

[* This ſtatue by Du Queſnoy, ſurnamed il Fiammingo, or the Fleming, is in the church of S. Maria di Loretto.]

[† The maſter-piece of that ſculptor, on the high altar of the church of St. Bibiena at Rome. *Keyſler.*]

[‡ In the monument of Julius II. a ſtatue more than twice as big as the life. *Wright.*]

Bouchardon alſo is by no means a moderate production; but compare the original French ſtatue with the copy of the Greek ſtatue in the gardens of Verſailles, the difference is incredible; it is the difference that there is between a man and a god. We cannot tell what a heathen deity was; but we are always ſenſible, on viewing this ſtatue, that it is the image of ſomething more than human.

When genius is unaccompanied by taſte, it is often ſurpriſed at wanting its effect; the character created, it remained for taſte to chuſe a moment to diſplay that divinity; that moment muſt be animated and intereſting; it muſt be indebted to grace, to majeſty, and expreſſion; and it muſt be ſo choſen, that the diſpoſition of the whole, and the diſtribution of each part of the ſtatue, muſt ſeem to flow from it with ſimplicity and eaſe. The artiſt therefore has choſen the inſtant in which this god gives the ſublimeſt proof of his divinity by an action of benevolence, in deſtroying an enemy of mankind: it is the inſtant after he has ſhot his arrow at the ſerpent Python; the arrow diſcharged, he follows it with his eyes to obſerve its effect; the expreſſion of each part of the body correſponds to that of the figure; and from an idea ſo ſimple, this Grecian has been able to form a work which has gained the applauſes of all men, and has made every artiſt deſpair.

When a perfect execution is added to genius and taſte, man, I think, cannot go farther. The finiſh of this Apollo is inconceivable, even to the moſt minute particulars, but the artiſt might almoſt have been excuſed the trouble of ſo perfectly completing his work; his conception is ſo ſublime, and his diſtribution ſo happy, that they alone would have commanded the admiration of all men of all countries; and a proof of this is the homage every where paid to the caſts of this breathing god.

The

The beſt method of giving you an idea of the ſuperiority of the Greek execution, is to relate a fact. The Laocoon was found with only one arm; another like it was deſired; ſeveral artiſts attempted it, and all failed; Michael Angelo, the boldeſt genius that Italy has had, who conceived the idea of placing the Pantheon in the air, and who made the dome of St. Peter's on the ſame dimenſions *, thought that he could ſucceed in it; and after having laboured on it for two years, abaſhed and deſpairing, he daſhed his work to pieces. Guilielmo della Porta, whoſe ſuperb mauſoleum in St. Peter's ſhews that he was an artiſt of the firſt rank, ſaid, that 'it was impoſſible to make it in marble, but that 'he would make it in clay;' and accordingly he made the right arm in clay, as it appears at preſent; an inconteſtible proof of the unattainable perfection of the Greek execution.

I allow it to be a bad proof of our being in the right, that ſome celebrated man is of our opinion; but I think that every reaſonable man ſhould well examine before he determines againſt a judgment ſo ſagacious as that of Pouſſin, and a genius ſo bright as that of Monteſquieu: the former ſtudied inceſſantly the beſt works ancient and modern, on which this was his deciſion: '*Raphael* '*compared with the moderns is an angel, with the ancients he is an* '*aſs.*' Compare the moſt beautiful figure of Raphael, detached, with the Apollo, and his fineſt group with the Laocoon, and judge for yourſelf.

France has no man who does her more honour in foreign countries, or who will do her more with poſterity, than Monteſquieu: it is well known that he made ſome ſtay in Italy, and that he did not view objects like a ſuperficial obſerver: this was his idea with regard to the Greeks; "*Taſte and the arts have*

* That celebrated artiſt, upon hearing ſome perſons extol the Rotonda as a work of antiquity never to be paralleled, ſaid, that he would not only build a dome equally large, but build it in the air; and he made his aſſertion good. *Keyſler.*

"*been*

" *been carried by them to ſuch a height, that to think to ſurpaſs*
" *them will be always not to know them.*"

LETTER XIII.

Between ROME *and* NAPLES.

'O HUMAN life!' I exclaim with Gil Blas, 'how doſt thou 'abound with misfortunes!' Yes, he is loſt, I ſhall never ſee him again, and my loſs will not afflict him leſs than his afflicts me. At the moment of ſetting out, one has a thouſand things to do; and for fear that my dog ſhould be ſtolen, an hour before my departure I put him into a cloſet, and there I have forgot him.

There is no country which gives riſe to ſo many ideas as Rome, and at leaving it I thought of all thoſe beauties ancient and modern; I thought of the poets, I thought of my * book; I often looked at the city; and I conſidered whether the † expreſſion of Jugurtha was as true at preſent as when he uſed it. My ſpirits being fatigued, I was going to divert myſelf with the converſation of my faithful companion—Ah! I have forgot him—I bitterly reproached myſelf for my blunder and my ingratitude; I diſcovered a hundred methods which would have prevented my loſing him; I thought of the wiſdom of that expreſſion of Fontaine, '*Too much of nothing*;' I have loſt him by too much care.

During the remainder of my journey I thought no more of Rome; I forgot even my book, I forgot glory, I forgot immor-

* Not this, another.

† *Urbem venalem cito perituram, ſi modo emptorem invenerit.*

tality, and I only thought of my dog. All his good qualities returned to my mind; he was good-natured, ſprightly, loving, his careſſes were ſincere, and he gave them only to me: he had in my eyes a ſtill farther merit, that of reſembling me, he was ugly: this circumſtance gave me ſome hope; 'No,' ſaid I, 'there 'are few capable of diſtinguiſhing true merit; my dog with his 'frightful ears will be found and reſtored to me.'

This idea comforted me a little, and I wrote to my landlord at Rome to ſend him to me.

LETTER XIV.

NAPLES, *February* 3, 1779.

IT is not ſurpriſing that Virgil ſhould make ſuch fine verſes at Naples: the air there is ſo ſoft and ſo pure; the ſun ſo brilliant and ſo warm, and the face of nature ſo rich and ſo diverſified, that the imagination is ſenſible of a vivacity and vigour which it never perceives in other countries.

I am not a poet, but I am very fond of verſes, and I have never read them with more pleaſure than here. Every time that I go to my window, I feel myſelf electrified, my ſpirits revive, my imagination warms, and my ſoul becomes ſuſceptible of the gentleſt and ſublimeſt impreſſions. This will not ſurpriſe you when I have only mentioned the objects which there preſent themſelves to view.

On the right is the hill of Poſilipo, whoſe form is moſt agreeable; it is ſemi-circular, and adorned to the ſummit with trees and pleaſure-houſes; from its point, which loſes itſelf in the ſea, this mountain inſenſibly increaſes 'till it arrives behind the centre

of

of Naples, and on its ſummit is ſeen a vaſt tower, which overlooks the city, and crowns the ſcene. On the left appears a chain of very high mountains which ſurround the other ſide of the gulph, and whoſe rugged boldneſs forms a moſt happy contraſt with the elegant and cultivated beauties of Poſilipo:—Shakſpeare and Corneille would always have looked on the ſide of Veſuvius; Racine and Pope on the ſide of Poſilipo.

The Volcano is the moſt intereſting of mountains by its form which is a very beautiful cone, by its height, and above all, by its neighbourhood to the city: it ſmokes inceſſantly, and ſeems always to threaten Naples with the fate of Sodom, to conſume it with fire and brimſtone. At its foot is Portici, and all along the ſide are towns * hanging from the mountains which form the portion of a circle of ninety miles.

The ſea is under my window, and beſides the ideas which it preſents itſelf, as the moſt intereſting object in nature next to the ſun, by its grandeur, its beauty, and the variety of its appearances, it here ſhews all the riches of commerce by the large ſhips which are paſſing every moment. I often riſe before day to enjoy the breath of the morning, and the ſuperb deſcription which the illuſtrious Rouſſeau gives of the riſing of the ſun. In no horizon does he appear with ſo much ſplendor, no where elſe does he ſo well deſerve the epithet of *aureus* †. He riſes behind Veſuvius to illuminate the pleaſant hill of Poſilipo, and the boſom of the moſt beautiful gulph in the univerſe, ſmooth as a mirrour, and filled with veſſels all in motion. The object which terminates the perſpective is the iſland of Capréa, famous for the retreat of Tiberius and the rocks of the Sirens: on view-

* Sorrento, one of thoſe towns, is the country of Taſſo.

† *Idcirco certis dimenſum partibus orbem*
Per duodena regit mundi ſol aureus aſtra.

The golden ſun, through twelve bright ſigns the year
Rules, and the earth in ſeveral climes divides.

ing it, one remembers that towards thoſe rocks the prudent Ulyſſes ſtopped his ears; and that, not far from thence, the leſs wiſe Hannibal gave himſelf up to the pleaſures of harmony, and to the careſſes of the enchanting Camilla.

LETTER XV.

NAPLES.

A FRENCHMAN is the moſt amiable of all men at home: why is he leſs beloved in foreign countries? It is becauſe other nations are jealous of the ſuperiority of the French, and becauſe the French traveller behaves ill in the company of foreigners. Almoſt all the French who travel are young; they ridicule all cuſtoms but their own, and found the vices and follies of a country in the midſt of its aſſemblies. I was this evening *all' Academia de' Cavalieri*, where all the nobility of the country meet twice a week. There enters for the firſt time a young French marqueſs, whom I had known at Rome. Before he had been there two minutes he ſaid to me, 'Did you ever ſee ſuch 'animals? What a ſtupid look has that man! O my God! how 'awkward is that woman! How can ſhe be ſuffered to dreſs her 'head in that manner!' All this he ſaid aloud, and even thoſe who did not underſtand him, ſaw by his manner that he deſpiſed them. The man who is going to execution, will allow that he is a villain, that he deſerves the rack; but he will never allow that he deſerves contempt. The young Frenchman takes the ſureſt method that the wit of man can deviſe to make himſelf hated: this has always given me pain, becauſe I know, that under this ſuperficial fault he conceals a thouſand good qualities;

he is trifling, he is ſelf-ſufficient, if you pleaſe; and that is the ſevereſt reproach his enemies can make him; but he is generous, he is frank, and he is always ready to draw his ſword in defence of his honour, of his miſtreſs, and of his friend. I ſhall be thought a Frenchman, and I am not ſo; I am an Engliſhman, and proud of being ſo; and at this moment I ſupport the character of my nation, and my own, by ſpeaking the language of truth and ſincerity, in repreſenting the French ſuch as I have found them.

As for the arts, Italy is ſuperior to France and England: in the ſcience of war the Germans have the advantage of the Engliſh and the French; but, on the whole, theſe two nations are the firſt in Europe, and all other nations allow their ſuperiority. One circumſtance which has always pleaſed me in France, is, that the Frenchman has always told me, that, next to his own, the Engliſh nation was the moſt reſpectable: nothing but an extravagant ſelf-love can oppoſe this deciſion: when the ſuffrages were collected at Athens, Ariſtides had the ſecond vote of all men; every one gave his firſt ſuffrage for himſelf. You, who are a rational being, ſet aſide for a moment your nation, and ſee how you would judge if the queſtion turned upon yourſelf: if a man ſhould ſay to you, ‘ I prefer myſelf to you, but I prefer ‘ you to all other men;’ if you were not ſatisfied with this opinion, you would betray an immoderate ſelf-love, and a total ignorance of the human heart.

On my road hither, while the horſes were changing, I alighted to walk a few minutes: a Frenchman is not afraid of ſpeaking to his fellow-creature, and ſoon ſtarts a ſubject; an officer of dragoons of that nation, who was going to Rome, and was at the poſt-houſe, came up to me, ‘ You are an Engliſhman, Sir?’ “ At your “ ſervice.”—‘ Yours is a very reſpectable nation: I paſſed three ‘ years in England: you have depth and ſolidity; you are well

'bred, brave, magnificent'—" and the French, Sir?"—'They 'think too much to make themſelves agreeable; they are too 'fond of trifling, fun, and amuſement: when a Frenchman 'travels, and loſes his conceit and his priggiſh airs, and when an 'Engliſhman acquires a little ſweetneſs and pleaſantneſs in his 'behaviour, they both of them become the firſt men in the 'world.'

I ſend you what this gentleman ſaid to me, becauſe I think like him.

* * *

P. S. The Abbé Galiani has the moſt wit of any man in Naples, and alſo the moſt learning; Duke Clement Filomarino is the poet who has the moſt talents and taſte; his brother ſtudies philoſophy, and has a very improved mind; both of them are extremely amiable, and very well bred; their family ſeems to me the moſt reſpectable in the country. The Duke della Torre, their father, has the fineſt gallery of paintings here.

LETTER XVI.

NAPLES.

THE Neapolitans are really good people; but, in truth, they are very barbarous: they have adopted by inſtinct the principles of the citizen of Geneva, and they cultivate neither the arts nor ſciences, for fear of corrupting their manners. But if this nation is barbarous, do not think that its barbariſm is ſevere, for, on the contrary, it is very good-natured, and very deſirous of contributing to the pleaſure of foreigners: they are naturally good,

good, but they are abſolutely in the ſtate in which nature produced them; and they perpetrate all crimes*, and are guilty of all ſorts of rudeneſs, without being apprehenſive of having done ill: having no education, they have no principle of any kind. A man of the firſt quality will tread on your toes, without making the leaſt apology: be acquainted with him the next day, he cannot do enough to oblige you; he will carry you to a concert, he will offer you his box at the theatre, he will do all he can, but he cannot do much. It is the ſame with the women; they have every diſpoſition to be amiable; it is a pity that they know not how.

The race of Sirens† is not yet extinct here; there are many young women who ſing divinely: of Circes there are ſcarce any; but we ſee in the aſſemblies ſeveral of the companions of Ulyſſes. The eaſineſs of the women and the *Scirocco* enervate the bodies of the men, and muſic their ſouls, ſo as to render uſeleſs all the bounties which nature has laviſhed on this charming country. In no other place will be found more natural talents, or more circumſtances favourable to the arts; but the cauſes above-mentioned, added to the indolence inſpired by the climate, and the abſolute want of Mæcenaſes, render Naples as ſavage as Ruſſia; and a kind of proof of it is, that all the Ruſſians who come hither are ſtruck with the reſemblance between the Neapolitans and their countrymen.

When a Neapolitan woman has no child, ſhe is a very miſerable being; for, having no reſource in herſelf, ſhe dies of the

* I am miſtaken, a rape was never heard of at Naples.

† Theſe Sirens ſometimes change into Harpies; but theſe metamorphoſes ſeldom happen but in the magic land of the opera.

Virginei vultus, fœdiſſima ventris
Proluvies, uncæque manus.

With virgin faces, but with wombs obſcene,
Foul paunches, and with ordure ſtill unclean,
With claws for hands, and looks for ever lean. *Dryden.*

ſpleen:

ſpleen: when ſhe has none, you may be ſure that it is not her fault, for the only idea which they have in their heads is that of love; and the only ſubjects on which they can talk are their children, their nurſes, their lovers, or their hair-dreſſers. I have often regretted that theſe women have no knowledge, for whatever they know they utter with an incredible freedom and ſimplicity. I was ſitting by one of them at their grand aſſembly; I had ſeen her only once before, but I had not converſed with her; a *Soprano* had juſt finiſhed an air, and I ſaid to the lady, 'That man has ſung well.' "It is not a man," ſaid ſhe, "it is "a *Muſico:* he has ſung very well, and he is the lover of that "dutcheſs whom you ſee yonder."—'Is it poſſible?'—"It is "true; ſhe has been very fond of *Cavalieri*, *Cocchieri*, *Abbati**, "at preſent ſhe will only have the *Muſici*." 'Oh!' replied I, 'that is ſhameful.' "Yes," anſwered ſhe, "ſhe is too incon-"ſtant;" *è troppo volubile*, was her phraſe.

I aſked another, whom I had known ſome time, how many lovers ſhe had, four or five? She aſſured me, with a moſt ſerious air, that ſhe had not had one for three weeks. Do not be ſurpriſed at my queſtion to this lady, it was in order to make court to her: A Neapolitan lady is vain of the number of her adorers, and I have ſeen ſome come into company with a train of five. In general, there are not more than two of them that are the well-beloved; the others are only kept as ſlaves for parade.

* * * *

P. S. I think, that when I marry, I ſhall chuſe an ugly wife, that, if I ſhould loſe her, I may be ſure to recover her. My dog has been ſent me: what rejoicings on both ſides!

O *qui complexus, et gaudia quanta fuere!*

O what were our embraces, what our joy!

* Gentlemen, Coachmen, Abbés.

LETTER XVII.

NAPLES.

THE king of Spain ſaid that 'every prince of the houſe 'of Bourbon muſt be paſſionately fond of women or 'of hunting:' his Sicilian majeſty is very fond of hunting; he ſcarce paſſes a day in the midſt of ſummer, or in the ſharpeſt colds of winter, without partaking of it. During my reſidence at Naples, he retired for two months to Caſerta, on purpoſe to hunt, which gave concern to all the Engliſh, as that deprived us of the ſociety and houſe of Sir William Hamilton, who then went to Caſerta, for the king never goes a hunting without him; and he is ſo fond of the company of that miniſter, that it was with difficulty he obtained leave from his majeſty to come for one day only to Naples to give a dinner to his countrymen: I dined there the forty-ſixth Engliſhman.

If I ſay nothing to you concerning Veſuvius, it is becauſe Sir William Hamilton has left nothing to be deſired on that ſubject. His letters, more ſatisfactory than thoſe of Pliny, will readily and with pleaſure inform you: they are written with clearneſs and preciſion, and with that noble ſimplicity which diſtinguiſhes their author in all the ſituations of life.

During the ſtay at Caſerta, the queen loſt her eldeſt ſon; he was a prince of five years of age, a charming boy. Her majeſty was in the eighth month of her pregnancy; twenty-four hours before his death, ſhe had been aſſured that he was out of danger; you may judge how ſevere a ſtroke this muſt be to a tender mother; and ſhe was very near ſinking under it. Theſe circumſtances alone were ſufficiently trying, but there was one dreadful moment which all but killed her. The young prince

ſeemed

ſeemed better for one day, but all on a ſudden he was ſeized with a convulſion fit: one of his women, a German, as ſhe was running to call aſſiſtance, hit her head againſt a door half-open, gave herſelf a large wound in her forehead, and fell backward in a ſwoon: the convulſions increaſed, and a ſecond woman, a German alſo, ran to haſten the phyſician; on her way ſhe found the firſt woman in a ſwoon and covered with blood; ſhe thought her dead, and the fright made her alſo fall into a ſwoon: the wind was very high, and, by what accident is not known, the roof of the prince's houſe took fire; the queen, arriving at that inſtant, found theſe two women in this ſituation, her ſon in agonies, and the palace in flames. Half an hour after the prince died *.

* Every ſtep of my travels has given me freſh occaſion to admire the truth with which Shakſpeare has painted all the objects in nature, and all the ſituations of human life. The queen afflicted herſelf for ſeveral days, and a lady of the court told me that ſhe often exclaimed, " Ah! " if my ſon had not been pretty, my loſs would have been leſs ſevere; but it was the moſt " charming child!" Theſe are almoſt word for word the ſame expreſſions which Shakſpeare has made a queen in *King John* utter in the ſame ſituation:

" *Conſtance.* Had he been ugly,
Lame, fooliſh, crooked, ſwart, prodigious,
Patch'd with foul moles, and eye-offending marks,
I would not care, I then would be content:
But ſince the birth of Cain, the firſt male-child,
To him that did but yeſterday ſuſpire,
There was not ſuch a *gracious creature* born."

And a little after,

" Therefore never, never
Muſt I behold my *pretty* Arthur more."

LETTER XVIII.

ROME.

THERE is not a river in Europe leſs beautiful than the Tiber, nor a character in hiſtory more dreadful than that of Auguſtus. Nevertheleſs, there is no river whoſe ſight is more intereſting; and few names inſpire more admiration than that of this emperor. For this let both of them thank Horace and Virgil; it is owing to the choice of their language, and to the harmony of their verſes, that the Tiber is no longer ſeen with diſguſt, and that the name of Auguſtus does not inſpire us with horror and ſadneſs. How ſenſible has the Great Frederick been of this truth! And with how much addreſs has he contrived to attach thoſe French and Italian writers who will be read with moſt pleaſure as long as the two languages exiſt! In a thouſand years the cries of widows, and the complaints of orphans, will no longer be heard; all the horrors which his wars have occaſioned will be forgotten; and nothing will remain of him but the rapid and irreſiſtible conqueror, the juſt and beneficent king, the patron of learning and arts, the great poet, the profound philoſopher, the able politician, and the charming man who is the delight of the choiceſt ſociety of his age.

The king of Pruſſia has always thought only of the future, and he has inſured the admiration of poſterity by his verſe, by his proſe, and by his actions. But as he has taken care to fortify his triple immortality by the graces of a Voltaire, and the elegance of an Algarotti, you may ſee by what he makes Glory ſay to a ſage who had gained her temple, that this divinity has always been the ſole object of his worſhip:

La Déeſſe, approuvant l'effort de ſon courage,
Lui dit, " Soyez heureux, jouïſſez du partage
" De ces eſprits actifs, auteurs, rois, et guerriers ;
" Le repos eſt permis, mais c'eſt ſous des lauriers."

The goddeſs, with his courage pleas'd,
" Be happy," cried, " the lot enjoy
" Of thoſe brave ſpirits, authors, warriors, kings ;
" Repoſe you may, but in a laurel ſhade."

His ode on glory ſhews alſo both the fire of his imagination, and the ruling paſſion of his ſoul :

Take the firſt lines ;

Un Dieu s'empare de mon ame,
Je ſens un céleſte ardeur ;
O Gloire ! ta divine flamme
M' embraſe juſq'au fond de la cœur.

A Deity my ſoul invades,
A warmth divine I feel ;
O Glory ! thy celeſtial flame
My heart's receſſes burns.

And the laſt ſtanza ;

O Gloire ! à qui je ſacrifie
Mes plaiſirs et mes paſſions,
O Gloire ! en qui je me confie,
Daigne éclairer mes actions :
Tu peux, malgré la mort cruelle,
Sauver une foible etincelle
De l'eſprit qui réſide en moi.
Que ta main m'ouvre la barriere ;
Et prêt à courir ta carriere,
Je veux vivre et mourir pour toi.

Glory !

Glory ! to whom I ſacrifice
My pleaſures and my paſſions too,
Glory ! in whom I truſt, O deign
To ſet my deeds in perfect day :
Thou of the ſpirit, that reſides
Within this clay, one feeble ſpark,
In ſpite of cruel death, canſt ſave.
O let thy hand the gate unbar,
And, ready thy career to run,
I'll live and die for thee.

LETTER XIX.

ROME.

AT Rome, as well as in all the other countries that I have ſeen, the French houſes are the moſt agreeable. The Cardinal de Bernis has a grand aſſembly once a week, and he gives a dinner every day. The bailiff de la Brillianté, ambaſſador from Malta, alſo frequently gives dinners; he is very affable, and has an excellent cook. His brother had ſent him a ſervice of china, which was made on purpoſe for him, with his arms; an Engliſh frigate took the French ſhip in which was the china, and the loſs was the more grievous as he was the ambaſſador of a neutral power. Three days after his receiving this news, I had the honour to dine with him, and he loaded me with civilities: I mention this as a ſtroke that characteriſes his nation.

Of all the grand aſſemblies here, that of Monſeigneur de Bayanne, auditor of the rota of France, has the moſt amuſements; a table of *Bocetti* in one room; in another literature, politics, news, are the ſubjects of diſcourſe; and in a third, you will find one of the beſt concerts in Italy, a ſuperb orcheſtra, and the firſt ſingers of both ſexes in Rome. You will find at his dinners French fare, French gaiety, French politeneſs. The maſter of the houſe is truly amiable; I only find one fault in him, and that is not a French fault, he is more fond of hearing than of talking. I am ſenſible that this is owing to his extreme politeneſs, but one ſuffers not the leſs, as he never opens his mouth but to utter things agreeable or things profound. A Frenchman talks better than other men; none have I known expreſs themſelves with more purity, more clearneſs, or more elegance: his taſte in literature is unqueſtionable: I have ſeen few perſons in my travels ſo engaging as he.

Colonel de Bayanne, his brother, is polite, agreeable, good-natured: he loves the arts, and amuſes himſelf with drawing ſome very pretty pictures.

It is of little importance to you for me to point out to you what is moſt intereſting in a country, and to ſave you the trouble and the time of diſcovering it yourſelf: take care then not to leave Rome without being introduced to the Marchioneſs de Bocca-Paduli: her coterie is the moſt agreeable and the beſt choſen in Rome: among other perſons of merit you will there meet the Count de Verri, a Milaneſe * gentleman, who abounds with politeneſs, talents, and taſte: The lady of the houſe will pleaſe you extremely, for ſhe is witty, handſome, and as amiable as a Frenchwoman.

* I muſt tell you here, in regard to the Milaneſe, that the Lombard heart is proverbially good in Italy.

I have

I have pleaſure in ſpeaking of perſons of whom I can with truth ſay much in praiſe: Here then follows an Engliſh young lady, who has done great execution here and at Naples: She has vivacity and judgment more than common; has read much, and aſſumes nothing: I have ſcarce ſeen a young woman ſo well educated, or ſo deſirous of inſtruction. She ſpeaks Italian well; French perfectly; ſhe is paſſionately fond of paintings and antiquities, and ſhe draws very prettily; but her moſt diſtinguiſhed accompliſhment is muſic: Millico, who has the moſt taſte of any ſinger in Italy, has been her maſter; and ſhe has ſo much profited by his inſtructions, that I have ſeen her ſeveral times enchant the moſt critical judges of Rome and Naples.

I met a young Frenchman at Turin, who had heard her ſing at Rome, and who was doatingly fond of the Italian muſic; I aſked him how he liked her? This was his anſwer:

J'entends encore ſa voix, ce langage enchanteur,*
Et ces ſons ſouverains de l'oreille et du cœur.

Her voice, th' enchanting language, ſtill I hear,
Thoſe ſovereign accents of the heart and ear.

Add to theſe talents, a charming ſhape, a form elegantly turned, a lily-white complexion animated by the moſt beautiful carnation in the world, two eyes full of ſweetneſs and ſpirit, and ſeventeen years of age, and you have the portrait of Lady Louiſa Nugent †.

Perhaps you will be tempted to ſuſpect that this is a fancy-piece rather than a copy from nature. I aſſure you it is as true a portrait as Titian or Vandyck ever painted; and my proof of it

* It is certain that the Italian is a divine language for poetry and muſic; it is alſo better to ſing than to ſpeak: the French language is much more rapid and determinate.

[† Daughter of Earl Nugent, now Counteſs Temple.]

is

is that this young lady has captivated three nations; the Italians were in raptures with her, '*aveva tanto brio, et tante buone maniere* *;' the French, '*elle étoit ſi jolie et ſi aimable*†;' and the Engliſh, '*ſhe was ſo modeſt and ſo ſenſible.*'

LETTER XX.

ROME.

I HAVE generally kept company here with the men of learning, eſpecially the poets. It is incredible, that with ſo many talents as the Italians have, they ſhould be ſo much behind other nations in their poetical knowledge: they have an obſtinate blindneſs in favour of their poets, of which I do not think they will ever be cured. *Le Bolge* of Dante, and the extravagances of Arioſto, are the objects of their idolatry; and, in ſpite of reaſon and common ſenſe, they prefer thoſe abſurdities to the fineſt productions of all other nations. Dante, according to them, is the firſt of all men; and Arioſto, whom they own to be inferior to Dante, is infinitely above Homer. After having read the *Divina Comedia*, and the *Orlando Furioſo*, I began to give my opinion of them according to the ideas eſtabliſhed in my country ‡, in France, and in all places where there are men of taſte.

* 'She had ſo much vivacity and politeneſs.'

† 'She was ſo pretty and ſo amiable.'

[‡ It is by no means ſo decided a point as this author ventures to aſſert, that Dante and Arioſto are not ranked among the firſt of poets even 'in this country;' and if in ſome well-known paſſages the former has equalled any poet of any age, his abilities muſt be allowed equal to his beſt lines. Arioſto, however, adopts a different plan; ridicule, ſatire, wit, and humour, with every romantic extravagance of an unconfined genius, an imagination without controul, and almoſt without equal, ſpread ſuch a variety over his work, that no reader can be weary through the lecture of XLVI Cantos, and while romance and whim declare the poem often comic rather than heroic, there are parts which no human power has ever yet excelled, as muſt be acknowledged by the impartial judge, who will, in ſpite of modern fine-drawn criticiſm, avow his real feelings through the

taſte. I ſpoke the language of reaſon, the Italian poets were not uſed to it; they declared war againſt me: I renounced their ſociety; and I thought I could do ſervice to poetry, by publiſhing a book in Italian, in which I endeavoured to ſhew young poets the principles on which they ought to compoſe: I told them that nature and truth were the only baſis of poetry; that the Greek authors were the beſt models on which a young poet could form himſelf; that France alſo had ſome excellent authors; that Racine was as good a model as Sophocles; that Greece had not a fabuliſt equal to la Fontaine, nor a comic poet ſo perfect as Moliere; that Horace, Longinus, and Boileau were the beſt critics that ever exiſted, and that nothing which was not conformable to

the riſe and progreſs of Orlando's madneſs, for which the whole ſeems to have been written; the reader is led on with the enamoured hero, by degrees feels all his weight of woes, and ſcarcely wonders at any extravagance they produce. No poet has more naturally, more pathetically, painted every ſtage and every effect of that incomprehenſible diſtemper ravaging a ſtrong mind in a moſt athletic body. In other parts every other paſſion may be found as well diſplayed; and in the character of Bradamante, in particular, every virtue, every charm, that can captivate a reader, for womanhood, in her moſt amiable appearance, is, with every refinement of ſentiment, preſerved through the whole character; and each character ſtands in the work as preciſely diſtinguiſhed from all others as even thoſe of Homer. The faults which none dare juſtify, and none can deſire to excuſe, are where indecent and groſs ideas are let looſe on the reader, but with ſo much wit, humour, and vivacity, that no one, it is ſuppoſed, ever could ſtop and paſs over his exceptionable cantos, though the whimſical author warns his reader, and particularly announces to the fair, that they ſhould not and need not read ſuch paſſages. And, after all, it has been ſuggeſted, particularly by the late ingenious Mr. Hawkins Browne, with great appearance of probability, that the whole deſign of the author was to ridicule romances, and that he is in heroic poetry what Cervantes is in proſe; and that even the Italians, who almoſt idoliſe their Furioſo, ſaw not that admirable deſign throughout the whole performance, which alone can excuſe the extravagant flights and comic abſurdities every where interſperſed, while the genius that gives theſe proofs of a moſt powerful imagination, proves likewiſe that he had power to have elevated his poem to any height he had choſen. Mr. Browne, who was an excellent judge, becauſe he was ſuperior to all little prejudices and minute criticiſms, held Arioſto in the higheſt eſtimation, and ranked him with the firſt of Italian poets. For wherever the pathetic, the animated, the terrible, the deſcriptive, or the plaintive, give opportunities for the Muſe to expatiate, her powers are unqueſtionable. And no leſs warm was this candid judge in his encomiums on Metaſtaſio, of whoſe extenſive genius, and chaſtity of ſtyle and ſentiment, he had the higheſt opinion; and for the fertility of his imagination, and the pointed ſtrength of his ſentiments, Mr. Browne ſtyled him the Shakſpeare of Italy! It is alſo obſervable, that his language is clearer to a foreigner, and eaſier to be underſtood by a learner of Italian, than any other poet of that country, which is an undoubted proof of the purity and perfection of his poetry.]

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is that this young lady has captivated three nations; the Italians were in raptures with her, '*aveva tanto brio, et tante buone maniere* *;' the French, '*elle étoit ſi jolie et ſi aimable*†;' and the Engliſh, '*ſhe was ſo modeſt and ſo ſenſible.*'

LETTER XX.

ROME.

I HAVE generally kept company here with the men of learning, eſpecially the poets. It is incredible, that with ſo many talents as the Italians have, they ſhould be ſo much behind other nations in their poetical knowledge: they have an obſtinate blindneſs in favour of their poets, of which I do not think they will ever be cured. *Le Bolge* of Dante, and the extravagances of Arioſto, are the objects of their idolatry; and, in ſpite of reaſon and common ſenſe, they prefer thoſe abſurdities to the fineſt productions of all other nations. Dante, according to them, is the firſt of all men; and Arioſto, whom they own to be inferior to Dante, is infinitely above Homer. After having read the *Divina Comedia*, and the *Orlando Furioſo*, I began to give my opinion of them according to the ideas eſtabliſhed in my country ‡, in France, and in all places where there are men of taſte.

* 'She had ſo much vivacity and politeneſs.'

† 'She was ſo pretty and ſo amiable.'

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their principles was good. I ſought only the progreſs of the art among men who abound with genius, and who have a divine poetical tongue, but who know not what to do either with the one or the other. I allow that theſe three critics would have been charmed with the beauties of Dante and Arioſto, taken from nature, and founded on truth; but that they would have condemned the whole of thoſe two poems, as being contrary to reaſon, to good ſenſe, and conſequently to good taſte, and, as models, being dangerous to an extreme for a young poet.

My book procured me ſome votes and many reproaches; the poets took the alarm; they cried that the true taſte of the Italian poetry would periſh, if attention were given to to an *Ultramontain* (a term ſynonymous with them to that of barbarian).

There were ſo many perſons who exclaimed, and they exclaimed ſo loudly, that I myſelf was beginning almoſt to believe that my book was good for nothing; when one morning I found an extract of it in the *Effémeridi Letterarie* of Rome, with ſome remarks which did it juſtice; this gave me the more pleaſure, as I was an utter ſtranger to it, to this very moment, and as that article was there inſerted by the Count de Bianconi, miniſter from the court of Dreſden, well known for his talents and taſte: with this ſuffrage, I had ten or twelve more; that was a great deal, if you conſider that at Naples I had only four: at Rome there are 200,000 inhabitants; at Naples 450,000: in thoſe two cities I found about ſixteen perſons who admitted nature and truth to be the foundation of poetry, and who acknowledged Horace, Longinus, and Boileau to be judges: of this ſmall number, the Abbé Scarpelli, whom you have heard mentioned as one of the beſt poets of the Arcadia, was one: this is a ſonnet which he ſent me, and which I inſert here, leſt you ſhould not have ſeen it at the end of the third edition of my book, where it is placed.

ALL' ERUDITISSIMO *Signor* SHERLOCK.

SONETTO.

Chi pon ſilenzio in Pindo al turbin roco
Di vuoti di ragion carmi ſonanti ?
Chi full' are del guſto avviva il foco
Dal cener freddo che premealo innanti ?

Sei tu, ſaggio SHERLOCK, che preſe a gioco
Le magic' opre e i favoloſi incanti,
Fai che a Natura e a Verità dian loco
L'alte follie de' Paladini erranti :

Tu diſſipi i Danteſchi orror ſegreti,
Che in Auſonia finor culto divino
Ebber dai troppo creduli poeti ;

Onde il guardo volgendo al ſuol Latino
Flacco e Boileau, fatte per te più lieti ;
Ecco; gridano, Italia, il tuo Longino.

Dell' Abbate Antonio Scarpelli,
Sotto-Cuſtode d'Arcadia in Roma.

To the moſt learned Signor SHERLOCK.

Sonnet.

On Pindus' ſummit who allays the ſtorms,
The empty reaſoning, of melodious bards ?
Who on the rock of taſte thus nobly warms
The frozen aſhes, wont to claim rewards ?
'Tis thou, ſage SHERLOCK, who haſt taught our youth
Of magic and romance to ſpurn the flights,
Triumphant long o'er nature and o'er truth
In the mad follies of advent'rous knights :

Thou Dante's ſecret horrors canſt diſperſe,
Crown'd in Auſonia by the ſons of verſe,
Too weak and credulous, with wreaths divine:
Whence turning to the Latian ſhore, we ſee
Horace, Boileau, made more renown'd by thee;
A new Longinus, Italy, is thine.

The Abbé Antonio Scarpelli,
Under-keeper of the Arcadia in Rome.

You have here a great deal of me and my book; but allowance muſt be made for the folly of an author: I always had ſelf-love enough, and ſince I have publiſhed, I perceive that I have much more.

LETTER XXI.

ROME.

Je ne vous paſſe rien ſi vous n'êtes Grand Homme;
Unleſs you're great, I will forgive you nothing:

THAT is well ſaid, and it is a great man who ſays it: But if you are a great man—one ought to bluſh at being able to diſcover a botch in Corneille, or a pun in Shakſpeare, when both are ſurrounded by a crowd of beauties: this is one of the ſubjects on which I have had occaſion to be diſſatisfied with the French; they were always attacking Shakſpeare, and I ſhould have ſuffered much leſs if they had reviled me myſelf. Nature never produced a poet equal to him; Homer approaches the neareſt to him, but at a far * diſtance: you ſmile; but a moment ago, ſay you, I condemned the Italians for the extravagance of their prejudices in favour of Dante; and now I am guilty of the ſame crime, and from the ſame cauſe, an exceſs of national ſelf-love. I have not preſumed to condemn Dante on my own ideas: ſtill leſs do I preſume to exalt Shakſpeare by my own underſtanding

* *Proximus . . . ſed longo proximus intervallo.*

alone: I would not admit the Italians as judges of Dante, nor the Engliſh as judges of Shakſpeare; I ſummon them both to the tribunal of Longinus, Horace, and Boileau; and I would have each of them hold the rank which ſhall be granted him by the united deciſion of thoſe critics.

It would be wronging me to think that I would exclude a nation from judging of its own poets. When men have their taſte formed on ſure principles, thoſe of the ſame country are unqueſtionably the beſt judges of their authors; but a Ruſſian, well acquainted with the poets and critics of Greece, Rome, and France, would judge with more certainty of the merit of Racine, than a Pariſian, born with equal talents, but who had not cultivated them.

I have reaſoned with the French in favour of our poet in the following manner: an Engliſh youth goes to ſchool at nine years of age; he ſtays there till ſixteen; he then paſſes five years at the univerſity: during that time he only ſtudies the Greek, Latin, and French authors, and the ſciences; for an Engliſhman does not make a ſtudy of his own language, the only eſſential fault in his education. At the age then of one-and-twenty, deeply read in the ancient authors, and with his taſte formed on the principles of Horace, Longinus, and Boileau, he begins to read Shakſpeare; the Engliſh nation is reckoned to have judgment, and this is their education; in two hundred years, there has not been a ſingle voice in this country againſt this poet: I have then quoted to them this paſſage of Longinus, in the very words of Boileau: "When in a great number of perſons of "different profeſſions and ages every one has been affected in "the ſame manner, this uniform opinion and approbation of "ſo many minds, in other reſpects ſo diſcordant, is a certain "and undoubted proof that there is ſomething of the marvel-"lous and the great."

All this has not convinced them; a Frenchman ſcarce ever chuſes to reaſon; he has always anſwered me with a joke.

The ſenſible Italians will own, allowing all the merit of Dante, that his poem is the worſt that there is in any language: when we think of the age in which he lived, the poet muſt be deemed a prodigy; when we read his poem at preſent, it muſt be conſidered as a maſs of various kinds of knowledge gothickly heaped together, without order and without deſign. Take away from the *Divine Comedy* five or ſix beautiful paſſages, and four or five hundred fine verſes, what remains is only a tiſſue of barbariſms, abſurdities, and horrors.

And had not Shakſpeare faults? He had great faults and many: he wrote ten volumes of poetry, he wrote for the ſtage, and he was obliged to flatter the taſte of his age, which was bad. Therefore the merit of Shakſpeare and that of Dante are equal; they both had ſublime beauties and great faults: there is only this difference, that the grand paſſages of the Italian poet are confined to the narration of Count Ugolino, the hiſtory of Franceſca di Rimini, the deſcription of the arſenal of Venice, and two or three more; and that the grand paſſages of Shakſpeare are innumerable; that in Dante we ſhall find, in three pages, four beautiful lines; and that in Shakſpeare we ſhall find, in four pages, ſix lines that are not beautiful.

This poet gained by his talents the patronage of ſovereigns, and the friendſhip of nobles; he was celebrated with emulation by all the poets his contemporaries and his ſucceſſors; an inconteſtible proof that a genius ſo rare was even ſuperior to envy.

The beſt pieces of Shakſpeare have ſome faults; but each of his good ones ſeems to me to reſemble the church of St. Peter: this temple, the moſt wonderful in the world, has a thouſand faults, a thouſand bad things in ſculpture, painting, &c. &c. but I pity the man who thinks of looking for them: when a fault preſents itſelf, let him take a ſtep farther, a ſublime beauty expects him.

Theſe ideas ſtruck me this morning while I was walking in that church: I went thither with a Pole, a Frenchman, and an Engliſhman: the Engliſhman looked for beauties; the Frenchman for faults; the Pole looked for nothing. When we were at the end of the church, 'Behold,' ſays the Frenchman, 'that 'Charity of Bernini, how bad it is! the air of her head is af-'fected, her fleſh is without bone, and ſhe makes frightful 'faces.' "Theſe remarks appear to me juſt enough," replies the Engliſhman, "but, look on the other ſide of the altar, you "will ſee one of the fineſt pieces of modern ſculpture, the *Juſtice* "of Guilielmo della Porta." 'You are in the right,' ſays the Frenchman (without looking at it), 'but that child at the foot 'of *Charity* diſguſts me more than its mother.' While the Engliſhman continued to praiſe *Juſtice*, and the Frenchman to criticiſe *Charity*, the Pole was obſerving the door at which he entered, and ſaid to me, that 'the church was much longer than he 'imagined.'

In paſſing under the dome, the boldneſs of Michael Angelo reminded me of the imagination of Shakſpeare; and the ſucceſſive impreſſions made on me by Juſtice, Charity, the St. Michael the Archangel of Guido, the St. Jerom of Dominichino, and the Transfiguration of Raphael, were ſimilar to thoſe which I have often felt in reading Othello, &c. The Frenchman has often too much delicacy in his taſte; he is too eaſily chagrined, and he ſuffers more pain from a fault than he taſtes pleaſure from ten beauties. I am the friend of reaſon and exactneſs as much as Boileau was; but I can pardon ſome faults which are compenſated by numerous and ſublime beauties.

Je ne vous paſſe rien ſi vous n'êtes Grand Homme,

is the language of the King of Pruſſia; it is alſo that of Longinus; and, leſt you ſhould have forgotten the paſſage, take it as follows:

"It

" It is almoſt impoſſible for a middling genius to commit " faults; for as he ventures nothing, and never riſes, he re- " mains in ſafety; inſtead of which, the great man, of himſelf, " and by his own greatneſs, ſlips and is in danger.—Though I " have remarked many faults in Homer, and in all the moſt " celebrated authors, and though I am perhaps the man in the " world whom they pleaſe the leaſt, I reckon that theſe are faults " which they did not regard, and negligences which eſcaped " them, becauſe their genius, which only ſtudied the great, " could not dwell on little matters. In a word, I maintain that " the ſublime, though it does not ſupport itſelf equally through- " out, prevails over all the reſt. In Theocritus, there is nothing " but what is happily imagined; but will you therefore ſay that " Theocritus is a greater poet than Homer, who wants order and " contrivance in ſeveral paſſages of his writings; but who " commits this fault only on account of that divine ſpirit which " hurries him away, and which he cannot regulate as he would?" Ah! if Longinus had read Shakſpeare!

This principle is in like manner ſupported by Horace;

—*Ubi plura nitent in carmine* (as in Shakſpeare) *non ego paucis Offendar maculis*;

In a work where many beauties ſhine,
I will not cavil at a few miſtakes:

And in a parentheſis, *Ubi pauca nitent in carmine*,

In a work where few beauties ſhine, as in Dante, I will not ſuffer myſelf to be dazzled by ſome ſhreds of * purple.

We ſhould have little enjoyment in the contemplation of the arts, or of nature, if we always looked for an exemption from faults. I do not aſk your indulgence for Carlo Maratti; but woe to the man who cannot pardon a defect in contour in Rubens or Corregio!

* *Purpureus pannus.*

LET-

LETTER XXII.

FROM THE MIDDLE OF THE ALPS.

I HAVE paſſed theſe mountains with a young Frenchman, a paſſionate admirer of the Italian muſic: when we arrived at our inn, we went to take a walk on the ſide of a ſmall lake, ſurrounded by a delightful wood: 'Faith,' ſaid he, 'Nature is 'very ridiculous here.'—"Ha!" replied I, "this is ſomething "new: I have often heard of the caprices of nature, but you "are the firſt who have diſcovered her ridiculouſneſs.—'Hark!' ſaid he; (the wood reſounded with the ſong of nightingales, and the lake was full of frogs that were croaking) 'have you ever 'heard ſuch a concert?'—"Yes, I have heard ſome Frenchmen "and Italian women ſing together." He took the joke in good part, and we laughed at the ridiculouſneſs of nature, and of the opera-ſingers at Paris.

From the date of this letter you expect, no doubt, ſomething ſublime on the Alps, on Hannibal, or Livy: Not a word; there is another volume of my letters, which I am going to mention to you, on the northern parts of Italy, which are much more cultivated in every way than thoſe of the ſouth, on the other German courts, &c. &c. But leſt I ſhould not fulfil this threat, let me tell you at preſent, that of all the princes whom I have ſeen, he that pleaſes me the moſt is Prince *Erneſt of Mecklenburgh-Strelitz; and that Venice ſeems to me the Athens of Italy. There is a fine opportunity of determining this laſt idea in *the Tribune* at Florence, by comparing the Venus of Titian with that of Medicis; examine them both with attention, and you will

[* Youngeſt brother to the Queen of England.]

allow

allow that no impartial perſon can prefer the work of the Grecian to that of the Venetian *. If you would ſtill have other proofs, I appeal to the general turn of mind and manners of the inhabitants; and I add to the name of Titian thoſe of Palladio, Maffei, and Algarotti.

As to Prince Erneſt, I think him every thing that can be deſired in a prince; and if you would have a proof of it, go to Zell.

LETTER XXIII.

FERNEY, *April* 26, 1776 †.

THE Marqueſs d'Argens, of Angoulême, gave me a letter to M. de Voltaire, with whom he is intimately acquainted. Every one recommended by M. d'Argens is ſure to be well received at Ferney: M. de Voltaire treated me with great civility; my firſt viſit laſted two hours, and he invited me to dinner the next day. Each day, when I left him, I went to an inn, where I wrote down the moſt remarkable things that he had ſaid to me; and here they are.

He met me in the veſtibule; his nephew, M. d'Hornois, counſellor in the parliament of Paris, held him by the arm; he ſaid to me, with a very weak voice, "You ſee a very old man, who

[* But, it may be aſked, how can a ſtatue be well compared with a picture, eſpecially of a maſter whoſe drawing is generally thought defective, and whoſe chief excellence is his colouring? and beſides, the Venus of Titian, I apprehend, is cumbent.]

† The reader ſees the reaſon why I have not placed my letters in chronological order; and if he does not ſee it, it is no matter.

makes

" makes a great effort to have the honour of ſeeing you; will " you take a walk in my garden? It will pleaſe you, for it is " in the Engliſh taſte; it was I who introduced that taſte into " France, and every one eagerly caught it; but the French pa- " rody your gardens, they put thirty acres in three."

From his garden you ſee the Alps, the Lake, the city of Geneva, and its environs, which are very pleaſant. He ſaid, " *It is* " *a beautiful proſpect*:" he pronounced theſe words very well.

S. How long is it ſince you were in England?

V. Fifty years at leaſt.

His Nephew. It was at the time when you printed the firſt edition of your Henriade.

We then talked of literature; and from that moment he forgot his age and infirmities, and ſpoke with the warmth of a man of thirty. He ſaid ſome ſhocking things againſt Moſes and Shakſpeare.

V. Shakſpeare is deteſtably tranſlated by M. de la Place. He has ſubſtituted de la Place to Shakſpeare. I have tranſlated the three firſt acts of Julius Cæſar with exactneſs: a tranſlator ſhould loſe his own genius, and aſſume that of his author. If the author be a fool, the tranſlator muſt neceſſarily be ſo too: Shakſpeare always had a fool; it was the taſte of the age, which he took from the Spaniards: the Spaniards had always a fool; ſometimes it was a god, ſometimes a devil; ſometimes he prayed, at other times he fought.

We talked of Spain.

V. It is a country of which we know no more than of the moſt ſavage parts of Africa, and it is not worth the trouble of being known. If a man would travel there, he muſt carry his bed, &c. When he comes into a town, he muſt go into one ſtreet to buy a bottle of wine, a bit of fiſh in another, he finds a table in a third, and ſits down to ſupper. A French

nobleman was paſſing through Pampelona; he ſent out for a ſpit; there was only one in the town, and that was borrowed for a wedding.

His Nephew. See there a village which M. de Voltaire has built!

V. Yes; we are free here; cut off a little corner, and we are out of France. I aſked ſome privileges for my children here, and the king has granted me all that I aſked, and has declared the country of Gex free from all the taxes of the farmers-general; ſo that ſalt, which formerly ſold for ten ſols a pound, now ſells for four. I have nothing more to aſk, except life.

We went into the library.

V. There are ſeveral of your countrymen (he had there Shakſpeare, Milton, Congreve, Rocheſter, Shafteſbury, Bolingbroke, Robertſon, Hume, &c.) Robertſon is your Livy; his Charles V is written with truth: Hume wrote his hiſtory to be applauded; Rapin to inſtruct; and both gained their ends.

S. You knew Lord Cheſterfield.

V. Yes, I knew him; he had a great deal of wit.

S. You know Lord Hervey*.

V. I have the honour to correſpond with him.

S. He has talents.

V. As much of the brilliant as Lord Cheſterfield, and more ſolidity.

S. Lord Bolingbroke and you agreed that we have not one good tragedy.

V. True: Cato is incomparably well written: Addiſon had much taſte, but the abyſs between taſte and genius is immenſe. Shakſpeare had an amazing genius, but no taſte; he has ſpoiled the taſte of the nation; he has been their taſte for two

[* Biſhop of Derry. The author, though an Engliſhman, ſtyles him '*Lord* Hervey' in his dedication.]

hundred

hundred years; and what is the taſte of a nation for two hundred years, will be ſo for two thouſand: this taſte becomes a religion; and there is in your country much fanaticiſm in regard to that author.

S. Were you perſonally acquainted with Lord Bolingbroke?

V. Yes; his figure was enchanting, and ſo was his voice; in his works there are many leaves, and little fruit; diſtorted expreſſions, and phraſes without a finiſh.

" There," ſaid he, " you ſee the Alcoran, which is well read " at leaſt:" it was marked throughout with bits of paper: " there are *Hiſtoric Doubts* by Horace Walpole" (which had alſo ſeveral marks) " here is the portrait of Richard III*; you ſee, " he was a handſome youth."

S. You have built a church.

V. True; and it is the only one in the univerſe in honour of God†; you have churches built to St. Paul, to St. Genevieve, but not one to God.

This is what he ſaid to me the firſt day. You will not expect any connection in this dialogue, becauſe I have only put down the moſt ſtriking things that he ſaid. I have perhaps murdered ſome of his phraſes; but, as far as I can recollect, I have given his own words.

* In the frontiſpiece, [drawn by Vertue and engraved by Grignion. Mr. Walpole purchaſed this drawing at Vertue's ſale. Whence it was taken is not known, probably from ſome painted window.]

† The inſcription was, *Deo erexit Voltaire.*

LETTER XXIV.

FERNEY.

THE next day, as we were ſitting at dinner, he ſaid, "We "are here *for liberty and property**. This gentleman† is "a Jeſuit, he wears his hat: I am a poor invalid, I wear my "night-cap."

I do not immediately recollect why he quoted theſe verſes:

Here lies the mutton-eating king,
Whoſe promiſe none relies on,
Who never ſaid a fooliſh thing,
Nor ever did a wiſe one‡.

But, ſpeaking of Racine, he quoted theſe two;

The weighty bullion of one ſterling line,
Drawn *in*§ French wire would through whole pages ſhine‖.

S. The Engliſh prefer Corneille to Racine.

V. That is becauſe the Engliſh are not ſufficiently acquainted with the French tongue to perceive the beauties of Racine's ſtyle, and the harmony of his verſification: Corneille muſt pleaſe them more, becauſe he is more ſtriking; but Racine pleaſes the French, becauſe he has more ſweetneſs and tenderneſs.

S. How did you find the Engliſh fare**?

* In Engliſh.

† Father Adam.

[‡ Lord Rocheſter on King Charles II.]

[§ 'to' in the original.]

[‖ Lord Roſcommon's Eſſay on Tranſlated Verſe. Engliſh Poets, vol. X. p. 215.]

[** In the original it is, "Comment avez vous trouvé la *chere* Angloiſe" [the Engliſh *cheer*]. Voltaire jocularly anſwers as if it were '*chair*, fleſh.' The tranſlator has endeavoured to retain the pun.]

V. Very

V. Very freſh and very white.

It ſhould be remembered, that when he made this joke upon the women, he was in his eighty-third year.

S. Their language?

V. Full of energy, preciſion, and barbariſm; they are the only nation that pronounces their A, E.

He related an anecdote of Swift: "Lady Carteret*, wife of "the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in Swift's time, ſaid to him, 'The air of this country is good." Swift fell down on his knees, 'For God's ſake, madam, don't ſay ſo in England; they 'will certainly tax it.'

He afterwards ſaid, that "though he could not perfectly pro- "nounce Engliſh, his ear was ſenſible of the harmony of their "language and of their verſification; that Pope and Dryden had "the moſt harmony in poetry, Addiſon in proſe."

V. How have you found the French?

S. Amiable and ingenious: I only find one fault with them; they imitate the Engliſh too much.

V. How! do you think us worthy to be originals ourſelves?

S. Yes, Sir.

V. So do I too; but it is of your government that we are jealous.

S. I have found the French more free than I expected.

V. Yes, as to walking, or eating whatever he pleaſes, or lolling in his elbow-chair, a Frenchman is free enough; but as to taxes—Ah! Sir, you are happy, you may do any thing; we are born in ſlavery, and we die in ſlavery; we cannot even die as we will, we muſt have a prieſt.

Speaking of our government, he ſaid, "The Engliſh ſell them- "ſelves, which is a proof that they are worth ſomething: we

[* Miſprinted 'Cartwright.']

"French

" French do not ſell ourſelves; probably becauſe we are worth " nothing."

S. What is your opinion of the Eloïſe?

V. It will not be read twenty years hence.

S. Mademoiſelle de L'Enclos has written good letters.

V. She never wrote one; they were by the wretched Crebillon.

" The Italians," he ſaid, " were a nation of brokers; that Italy " was an old wardrobe, in which there were many old cloaths " of exquiſite taſte. We are ſtill," ſaid he, " at a loſs to know " whether the ſubjects of the Pope or of the Grand Turk are " the moſt deſpicable."

He talked of England and of Shakſpeare; and explained to Madam Denis part of one ſcene in Henry V, where the King makes love to Queen Catherine in bad French, and of another in which that Queen takes an Engliſh leſſon from her waiting-woman, and where there are ſeveral very groſs double entendres, particularly on the word '*foot*;' and then addreſſing himſelf to me, " But ſee," ſaid he, " what it is to be an author; he will do " any thing to get money."

V. When I ſee an Engliſhman crafty and fond of law-ſuits, I ſay, 'Behold a Norman, who came in with William the Con-'queror!' When I ſee a man good-natured and polite, 'that is 'one who came with the Plantagenets;' a churl, 'behold a 'Dane;' for your nation, as well as your language, is a medley 'of many others.'

After dinner, paſſing through a little parlour, where there was a head of Locke, another of the Counteſs of Coventry, and ſeveral more, he took me by the arm, and ſtopped me—" Do you know " this buſt*? it is the greateſt genius that ever exiſted: though " all the geniuſes of the univerſe were aſſembled, he would lead " the band."

* It was the buſt of Newton.

Of

Of Newton, and of his own works, he always ſpoke with the greateſt enthuſiaſm.

LETTER XXV.

IF you have not time to read a ſhort detail of trifling circumſtances relating to Voltaire, ſkip this letter.

His houſe is convenient, and very well furniſhed; among other pictures is the portrait of the Empreſs of Ruſſia, and that of the King of Pruſſia, which was ſent him by that monarch; and his own buſt in Berlin porcelain, with the inſcription IMMORTALIS.

His arms are on his door, and on all his plates, which are of ſilver: at the deſert, the ſpoons, forks, and blades of the knives, were of ſilver gilt: there were two courſes, and five ſervants, three of whom were in livery: no other ſervant is allowed to enter.

He ſpends his time in reading, writing, playing at cheſs with Father Adam, and in looking on the workmen in his village.

The ſoul of this extraordinary man has been the theatre of every ambition: he wiſhed to be a man of univerſal learning; he wiſhed to be rich; he wiſhed to be noble; and he has ſucceeded in all.

His laſt ambition was to found a town; and if we examine, we ſhall find that all his ideas had this in view. After the diſgrace of M. de Choiſeul, when the French miniſtry had laid aſide the plan of building a town at Verſoix, in order to eſtabliſh a manufactory there, and to undermine the trade of the Genoeſe,

Voltaire determined to do at Ferney what the French government had intended to do at Verſoix.

He embraced the moment of the diſſenſions in the republic of Geneva, and by fair promiſes he engaged the exiles to take refuge with him, and many of the malcontents followed them thither.

He cauſed the firſt houſes to be built, and gave them for a conſtant quit-rent; he then lent money, by way of annuities, to thoſe who would build themſelves; to ſome on his own life, to others on the joint lives of himſelf and Madam Denis.

His ſole object ſeems to me to have been the improvement of this village: with that view he aſked an exemption from taxes, and with that view he endeavoured every day to inveigle workmen from Geneva to eſtabliſh there a manufactory of clock-making. I do not ſay that he did not think of money; but I am convinced that it was only his ſecondary object.

On the two days that I ſaw him, he wore white cloth ſhoes, white woollen ſtockings, red breeches, with a night-gown and waiſtcoat of blue cloth flowered and lined with yellow: he had on a grizzle wig with three ties, and over it a ſilk night-cap embroidered with gold and ſilver.

Twelve years ago he had his tomb built on the ſide of his church fronting his houſe. In the church, which is ſmall, there is nothing extraordinary, except over the altar, where there is a ſingle figure in gilt wood, without a croſs: it is ſaid to be himſelf; for it is pretended that he has always had an idea of founding a religion.

LETTER XXVI.

"YOU would publiſh a book," ſays La Bruyere; how many critics will fall upon you! You will be called to account for your thoughts, for your phraſes, for your words. "This," you are told, "is only proper for converſation; that is only uſed "in a florid ſtyle; this other is trite, this laſt is not allowable; "write according to the faſhion, or do not pretend to write at all."

Alas! thus am I already condemned; I know nothing of the faſhion, and I cannot forbear* to write. I cannot give an account either of my phraſes, or of my words†; much leſs of my ſoleciſms and barbariſms: Pardon therefore the ſtyle, dear reader, and recollect that in my preamble I promiſed you nothing but ſome ideas and truth.

LETTER XXVII.

Qui ſe peint tout en beau dans ces lieux qu'il habite,
Méconnoit la nature, et rêve en Sybarite.

He miſtakes nature who paints all things bright,
And dreams like a luxurious Sybarite.

THE philoſopher of Sans-ſouci is in the right; and I think I am not miſtaken in ſaying that we ought to look on the fair ſide as much as we can, becauſe in that conſiſts our happineſs. I wiſh that this ſyſtem were univerſal, and in order to

* *Tantus amor ſcribendi me rapuit.*

† I except one only; if an expreſſion in my firſt page be criticiſed, I anſwer that I have uſed it in its literal ſenſe, that I know no title ſo glorious for a man as that of *good*; and if the wickedneſs and depravity of mankind have annexed other ideas to that word, that is not a reaſon why it ſhould not be uſed in its primitive ſignification.

eſtabliſh it, I would have every one look for the bright rather than the dark ſide of each object; the oppoſite ſyſtem is that which prevails; a new character comes into company, a new book appears, nothing is ſought for in them but faults; and if you find none, it is thought a proof of your want of wit: I have always thought the contrary; and I think it a more certain proof of wit and taſte to ſet off a ſingle beauty than to point out ten faults. In your travels therefore look always for the beautiful; and when you meet a diſagreeable object, turn away your head: I allow you but one exception to this rule; when a beggar preſents himſelf, look upon him; for you can convert into pleaſure the pain which the ſight of him will give you, by relieving his diſtreſs.

Adieu, my deareſt friend; I have travelled ſeveral years; I have ſeen many men; and the moſt valuable leſſon that I have learned in my travels is this: Different countries have different taſtes, and different ways of thinking on various ſubjects: in one point they all agreed, that the beſt letter of recommendation that a man can carry, is a GOOD HEART; and that the ſureſt method to make himſelf loved and reſpected every where, is to DO GOOD.

FINIS.

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